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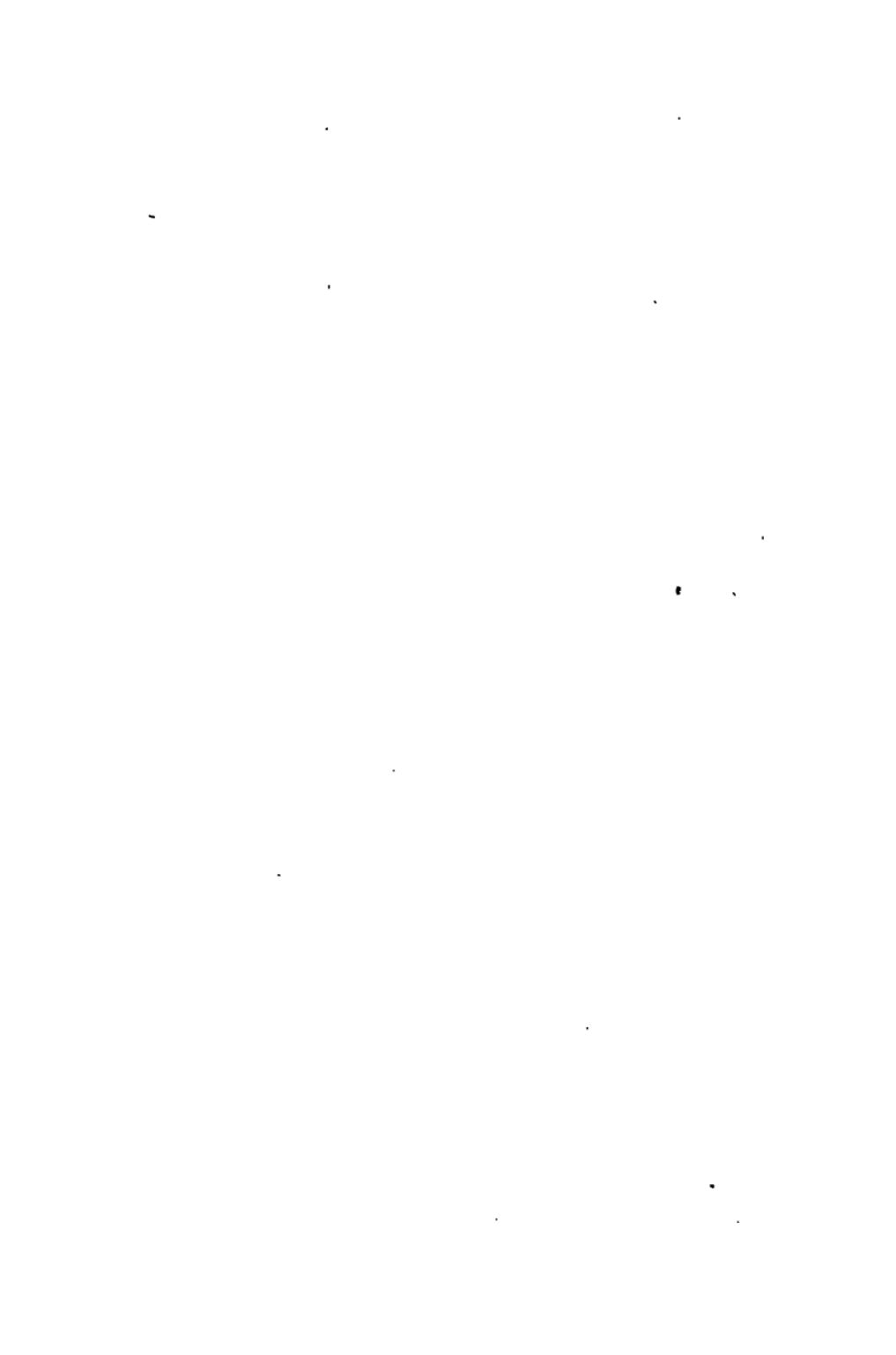




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FRONTISPIECE.



ALICE.
(And the Fairy.)

BY DOROTHY NELSON.

FAIRY FAVOURS;
with
OTHER TALES.

E. A. D.



(L O N D O N .

Printed for William Cole,
10, Newgate Street.

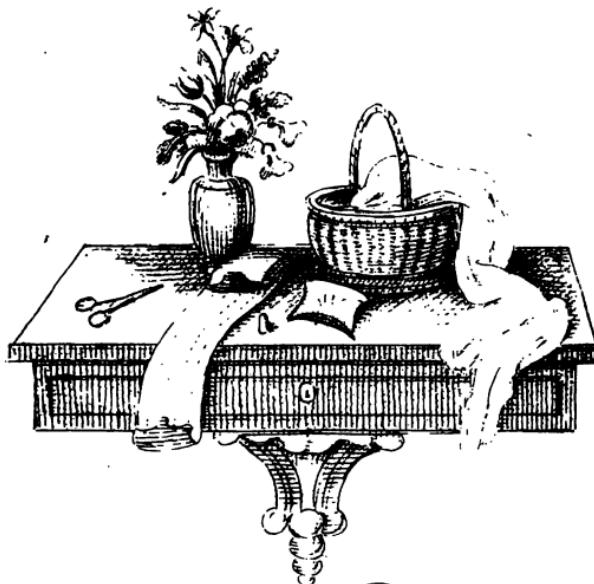
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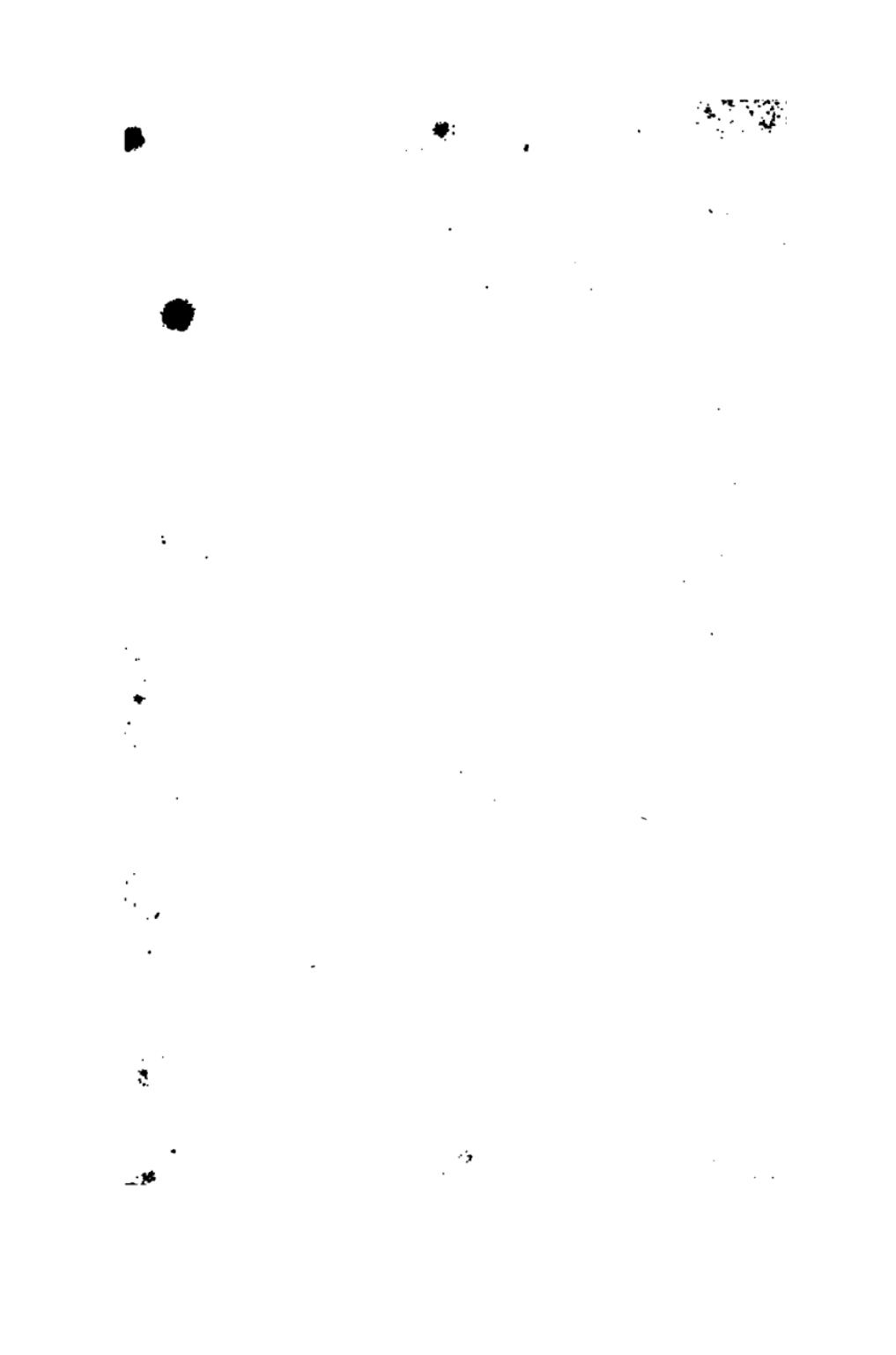
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FAIRY FAVOURS,

AND

OTHER TALES.

By E. K. D.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM COLE,
10, NEWGATE STREET.

1825.

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juvenile character; and, where instruction can be conveyed in a pleasing or fanciful form, not to withhold the delightful vision.

Much of the wisdom of past ages has come down to us in the shape of fables, parables, visions, &c. and these have also recently been used as the best means of fixing the attention of the youthful mind, where graver methods would have been disregarded. That which does not interest often clogs the memory, which, in that case, becomes only the depository of words mechanically arranged, without a single idea being attached to them. In the course of instruction it is well, therefore, to introduce a due mixture of that kind of fiction by which truth is conveyed, more especially where it is rendered pleasing and attractive; for, however valuable its precepts

may be, it may be rendered harsh and disgusting by the shape it assumes, and must often, therefore, be made to win its way by a circuitous route; as in the instance of "the Parable of Nathan," and many others.

The pleasures of the imagination, when under the guidance of reason, are among our best enjoyments.

In conclusion it may be observed, in the words of an elegant writer, * that "Cold and phlegmatic minds have frequently murmured against those charming fictions with which Homer, Hesiod, and succeeding poets, have embellished their works; but, should their inventions not conceal important

* Introduction to the Orleans Collection of Antique Gems.

truths, and frequently the most useful instructions—still, would it be wise to destroy a system which peopled and animated all nature, and made a solemn temple of the vast universe?"

FAIRY FAVOURS, AND OTHER TALES.

FAIRY FAVOURS.

AT a time when fairies not only played their gambols abroad, but entered the dwellings of the rich, and haunted the cottages of the poor, for purposes either of good or of ill, as best suited the dispositions of these tiny meddlers, or rather the character of those on whom they would exercise their power, there lived a poor but industrious couple, of the name of Martyn. They had one little girl, called Ellen, of whom both father and mother were extremely fond; yet this child, though their greatest delight, was frequently the occasion of argument, sometimes bordering on dispute, between the husband and wife.

It happened that a young woman in their neighbourhood had been married, on account of her beauty, to a very rich man; and the circumstance of this poor girl becoming all at once a fine lady, very much disturbed the quiet of the village; yet

the splendid destiny of Flora Simons was very far from being an enviable one.

Raised to a station in life for which neither her education nor her early habits had qualified her, the unfortunate young creature passed her life in a constant struggle to sustain her present exalted rank with becoming ease and propriety of demeanour; but the effort was unavailing; she lost the simplicity of the village maiden, without being able to acquire the manners of the woman of quality.

Neglected by her husband, and by those moving in the same sphere, Flora pined in secret for the friends of her early years, and the happiness she had experienced in her native place; through which, when she occasionally passed, those who had formerly known her could scarcely recognise in her pale and altered countenance the features of their once gay and happy companion: but the pity which was momentarily excited by the change in her appearance was quickly succeeded by envy, as they gazed with admiration and astonishment at the splendour of her carriage, and the retinue with which she was surrounded; and the extraordinary good fortune (as it was always called) of Flora Simons never ceased to be a theme of wonder to her former associates.

Among the number, Alice Martyn had been one of her most intimate ; and, having had many opportunities of seeing her since her marriage, knew better than any one else, how little real happiness her former friend enjoyed ; yet this knowledge did not prevent the wish, that *her* own child might make the trial of some such good fortune ; for she hoped, as people generally do in their own case, that the good would come unalloyed, trusting that her daughter might enjoy all the advantages of high rank, without suffering any of its inconveniences.

Alice had also great faith in the good luck bestowed by fairies ; and she frequently expressed a wish, that one of these kind beings would bestow beauty and riches upon her darling. This wish generally brought a reproof from her husband, who asserted, that *fairy favours* were dangerous things, and often brought people into trouble ; and that, if their child grew up healthy, and with a good disposition, they could desire nothing better.

These remonstrances generally silenced, though they failed to convince Dame Martyn, who was not to be persuaded but that beauty and riches were the most enviable things in the world.

As Alice, one summer evening, was sitting at

the door of her cottage, plying her distaff, and little Ellen playing near her, the usual reflections were followed by the usual wishes.

“ Ah !” thought the dame, “ my child is now frisking about, and as merry as a kitten ; but in a few years she will be obliged to work as hard as her mother does. Silly man, as my husband is, to be angry with me for desiring that my child should become rich ; as if it would not be a fine thing to have all one wants, without the trouble of toiling early and late, as we are forced to do. I only wish”——

At this moment Alice was interrupted in her soliloquy, by seeing a female standing before her, whose singular beauty, glittering attire, and, above all, the sensations of awe which her appearance inspired, convinced the poor woman that she beheld, in this resplendent form, a being of no ordinary class. Her brow was decorated with flowers of every season ; a robe of the purest white, and most delicate texture, showed a form of exquisite symmetry ; a violet-coloured scarf hung loosely about her, and its undulating folds gave grace to every motion. Above all, a gem of such unrivalled brightness shone on her breast, that its sparkling rays so dazzled the eyes of the beholder,

as to prevent the features of this gifted being from being distinctly traced, the sight resting on the jewel as if by enchantment, and seeming ever under its varying influence.

"Behold in me," said the stranger, addressing herself to Alice, "the fairy Fortuna. I am come to comply with your wishes, and to bestow upon your offspring the blessings you have so eagerly desired."

As the mother listened, joy succeeded to the terror and amazement into which the sudden appearance of the bright genius had thrown her. She could not, however, find words to express her gratitude; but, in speechless ecstasy, presented her child, upon whose forehead the shining fairy imprinted a kiss; and immediately, to the eyes of the enraptured parent, a skin fairer than alabaster, cheeks of the rose's tenderest hue, and lips that might vie with the brightest coral, took place of the homely features which had hitherto marked the little sunburnt daughter of Gillam and Alice Martyn.

This sudden change did not so far alter the countenance of the child as not to allow it to retain a strong resemblance of what it had been; and, though greatly improved, enough was left of the features to mark its identity.

betray itself, and lead him to inquire into the cause of it. She began with more than customary alacrity to busy herself about her domestic concerns ; but her husband, fatigued with the toils of the day, was by no means a nice observer ; and as he sat beneath the pear-tree, enjoying the cool evening breeze, and listening with delight to the innocent prattle of his child, Martyn little dreamed of what had occurred during his absence, or of what was passing in the mind of his wife.

The satisfaction Alice at first felt, that she had not entrusted her darling to the fairy, was succeeded by regret at having missed such a golden opportunity of raising the fortune of her child ; and the more she thought on the subject, the more this latter feeling prevailed. In short, what had before been but a pleasing fancy became from this time the serious occupation of all her thoughts.

Day after day did she take her accustomed seat. Her spinning-wheel moved heavily round, and often stood still, while Alice sat with her eyes fixed on the spot where she had seen the fairy, indulging the hope that the bright genius would again appear ; but weeks and months wore away, without realizing her expectations. "Doubtless," thought she, "the fairy is gone to bestow her

favours upon those who will be more grateful for them."

The summer was now over; autumn was closing into winter; and every hour, as it passed, as it diminished the hopes, added to the regrets of Alice; when, on a day that she was more busy than usual, and so intent upon her employment that even her ambitious views were for a time forgotten, she was startled by hearing her name pronounced, and beholding at the same instant the fairy Fortuna.

Alice at first dared scarcely raise her eyes, not doubting but that the genius was offended with her, for having formerly slighted her offered favours. But on that point her fears were groundless; for, in the most generous manner, the genius again offered to bestow her gifts on the little Ellen, upon the same conditions as at first.

To have once more the opportunity of embracing the advantages she had before refused, had long been Alice's most ardent wish. There was also the circumstance, at this time, of the absence of her husband, whose return was not expected for some days, which favoured the plan, as this interval would afford her sufficient time,

she imagined, to frame a plausible excuse for the departure of the child.

But although every thing now seemed to facilitate the accomplishment of her wishes, Alice felt a strange alarm at the idea of entering into a secret engagement with a being whose presence, notwithstanding her beauty, and the winning smile which decked her features, inspired the dame with indescribable awe. Indeed, the sensation she experienced was so like a presentiment of evil, that in almost any other circumstance it would have deterred the wife of Gillam ; but she had nourished her favourite wish into such strength, that dangers and difficulties fled before it. So, after promising implicit obedience to the commands of the fairy, and exacting in return an assurance that her daughter should be restored to her in safety, at the time appointed, the mother gave her devoted child to the care and conduct of the genius, and both were immediately lost to her view.

Left to her own reflections, Alice sought in vain to relieve her spirits from the weight that oppressed them, by anticipating the future prosperity of her darling ; and with as little success

did she endeavour to justify herself in her own mind for the step she had taken, and the deception she must practise towards her husband.

But uneasiness for what she had done gave way to anxiety for what she was next to do ; and the more she thought of it, the more difficult did the task appear of imposing a falsehood upon Gillam. No choice, however, was left her, and Alice passed the greater part of the night in racking her invention for the purpose of framing a pretext for Ellen's absence.

At length the following plan presented itself : her husband had an aunt living at a distance, who, having brought him up, was regarded by Gillam with as much affection as if he had been her son ; and good Dame Janet, in return, felt all the love of a parent towards her nephew.

Martyn had often expressed a wish to his wife that his relation could see his little girl. Alice's scheme, therefore, was to tell her husband, that his aunt had been to see them while he was away, and was so much pleased with the child, that she had insisted upon taking her back with her. In this affair Dame Martyn thought herself pretty secure from detection ; as, notwithstanding the mutual kindness and good will which subsisted,

there was but little intercourse between the families, on account of the distance which separated them from each other.

An annual present of a large cheese, which the Martyns received, was the only token they had that their aunt was alive, and had not forgotten them; a ham of Alice's curing gave the good dame, in return, an assurance of their welfare.

This confined mode of correspondence suited, in the present case, Alice's purpose well enough; and now, having arranged her plan, she became far more at ease in her mind, and even began to congratulate herself upon her contrivance; when, on the evening of the following day, Gillam, whom she did not expect back for at least a week, made his appearance,

Alice was a good deal disconcerted at her husband's unexpected return, being aware that the improbability of his relation's having paid them such a hasty visit, as during the short interval of his absence, would not fail to strike him. Her brain, however, was not sufficiently inventive to furnish her with any more plausible invention than that which she had planned. At all hazards, she must now bring forward her story.

As Gillam entered his cottage he looked

anxiously round ; and almost his first words were after his child.

“ She is well,” replied Alice, with assumed cheerfulness ; and, willing to put off the explanation as long as possible, began in her turn to question her husband about his journey, and why he returned so much sooner than he had proposed.

“ I certainly might have staid longer ; for the business on which I was engaged for my master was quickly despatched ; and, being so far on the road, I did intend to have gone on to the fair of” —

“ Ah, surely,” cried Dame Martyn ; I quite counted on your going there, where you would have met so many of our old friends, and then you might have brought us” —

Here Alice was interrupted in her turn.

“ How,” said Gillam, “ could any such thing enter your head ; it was the chance of a thousand that I met with a chapman so soon. You know I have always been detained longer than was expected, and you had no right to count on my going to the fair at all.”

Alice was now at a nonplus, and had nothing for it but—“ I thought ;” which thinking with most people generally comes at the wrong time.

Gillam did not pursue the subject further, but went on to acquaint his wife with the reasons that prevented his proceeding to the fair of ——".

"I am not given to be superstitious, Alice; but last night I had so strange a dream, that I could not overcome the impression it made."

"And what was your dream?" eagerly inquired his wife.

"I thought," said Gillam, "that I was working in the fields as usual, when an animal like a wolf, but much larger, ran along, and I saw it making its way towards our cottage. I exerted all my strength, and endeavoured to reach the garden-gate, and close it before the monster could enter; but I was too late, for the creature had seized on Ellen's favourite lamb. I fancied, however, that it seemed to look at me for an instant, as fearing to pass, and I turned round to find some weapon, but in that moment it had gained the outside of the enclosure, and when I looked again—Oh, Alice! judge what were my feelings, when, instead of the lamb, I saw it was Ellen, our own dear child, that the monster held in his jaws. And I thought," continued Gillam, fixing his eyes on the pale countenance of his wife, who looked horror-struck at the recital of his dream,—"I

thought that, when I was about to pursue the wolf, you held my arm, and endeavoured to detain me ; and in the struggle I awoke.

“ Rejoicing to find it was but a dream, I endeavoured to shake off the impression, but in vain. I could sleep no more that night ; and when morning came, I tried to reason myself out of the apprehension of evil, but my mind was too much disturbed to allow me to lengthen my stay ; and when I came in and did not see the child playing about as usual, I felt terrified ; and, to show you how far fancy can go, I even thought that you looked alarmed, as if something terrible had happened. But where is my little Ellen ?”

Alice could no longer avoid an explanation ; and, with a composure very foreign to her feelings, began her recital.

The surprise of Gillam was only equalled by his mortification at having missed, as he thought, the opportunity of seeing his relative. One minute he accused Dame Janet of unkindness, and the next laid all the fault upon his wife, for not having sufficiently pressed her stay.

For his anger and vexation Alice was however fully prepared, and she bore it with the utmost patience ; but there was one thing for which she

was not prepared: it was the very natural inquiry that Martyn made as to the occasion of his aunt's taking so long a journey, which, he observed, could not be for the purpose of visiting them, or she would have remained longer.

Alice wondered it had not occurred to her that Gillam would ask so likely a question; but not knowing what reply to make, she told her husband, that as Dame Janet did not of her own accord communicate the reason for her coming, she did not think proper to ask any questions about it.

This answer by no means satisfied her husband.

“ Truly, Alice,” said he, “ you are not often in the habit of letting your civility get the better of your curiosity; nor can I myself find out where the impropriety would have been in making such an inquiry.” Gillam went on to conjecture upon the matter, but all concluded in his strongly regretting having been away from home. At length he began to talk about his child.

“ Ah!” cried Alice, rejoiced that his thoughts had taken that turn; “ your aunt says she will grow up very handsome, and doubts not but that she will make her fortune.”

“ I think my aunt must be very much altered,”

said Gillam, “ for she never used to talk such nonsense: indeed, I am not a little surprised at her taking Ellen home with her; for though she is very good to children, I know she does not like the trouble of them.”

Alice maintained, with all the pertinacity of a partial mother, that such an engaging child as Ellen would be a trouble to no one, but that, on the contrary, her company would give great pleasure to Aunt Janet, who doubtlessly was in want of amusement.

Martyn, though far from being of his wife’s opinion, did not care, in the present instance, longer to contest the point; and the subject accordingly dropped.

On the morrow Alice perceived, with much satisfaction, that her husband’s ill humour had subsided; and she hoped that, as he had got over the disappointment of the preceding day, things would now go on smoothly: but Dame Martyn had little time to rejoice, before she found herself plunged into new difficulties.

The day before, Gillam was too vexed to make many inquiries; but he now plied his wife with innumerable questions respecting his old friends and acquaintance, as the village in which his aunt

reaided was the place where he had passed the greater part of his life.

Alice began now to be very uneasy at the thoughts of the deception she had practised, and how the deception was to be kept up; and the answers she gave her husband were so confused and contradictory, that Gillam, though by no means of a suspicious disposition, saw plainly that all was not right.

Unsettled in his mind, Martyn every day renewed the theme; and though he gained nothing satisfactory, he continued to perplex his wife with inquiries and observations.

“ It is very strange, Alice,” said he one day, “ that you should have forgotten to ask after Geoffry, when you knew how anxious I had long been to hear something concerning him.”

Dame Martyn’s patience was tired out with the repetition of questions which she found herself unable to answer. Grown bolder, also, in the assertion of falsehood, and hoping at once to silence her husband upon the subject, she declared that the fact was, Dame Janet appeared as if something had displeased her, and was so reserved in her general behaviour that it was impossible to ask her any questions at all.

"I thought so," said Martyn—"I suspected it all along; that accounts for her leaving us so suddenly. In what can we have offended her?—and how odd that she should have taken the child with her; at all events, I shall not rest till I have seen my aunt."

Alice, who had not before thought of being consistent in her story, began to take alarm at the latter part of her husband's speech. A meeting with his aunt was, of all things, to be dreaded; and, entreating Gillam not to make himself uneasy about it, she endeavoured to retract what she had just before asserted.

It was evident, however, to Gillam, that there was some concealment in the case; and Alice saw plainly that suspicions were raised in her husband's mind beyond what it was in her power to remove.

Six months wore away; and as Martyn, during that time, never mentioned the affair, his wife trusted that he thought no more about it, and she began to look forward to the return of her child, and to indulge once more in the anticipation of Ellen's future exaltation.

It appeared, notwithstanding their mutual silence on the subject, that the husband and wife

had their separate plans. Martyn went earlier to his work than he had been accustomed, and returned later; yet he gave no reason for so doing; nor, at the end of the week, did he bring home any more money than usual. Aware how little she deserved the confidence of her husband, Alice did not venture to make any remarks; but she could not help conjecturing on the matter.

Gillam had often longed that he could purchase himself a mule, or perhaps he had in view some addition to her dress, as her wishes on that point had often enough been repeated for her husband not to forget them. All her suppositions, however, proved wide of the mark: Gillam at length told his wife why he had been saving his money; and, to her utter dismay, Alice learned it was for the purpose of making a journey to his relation.

Dame Martyn, whose consternation at hearing her husband's intention may well be imagined, entreated, but in vain, that he would not think of such a thing, raised every obstacle, and started every objection in her power; but all to no purpose: Gillam's resolution was fixed. He had two powerful motives for taking this step: extreme anxiety to see his child, who had been so long from home, and an eager wish to satisfy his mind.

respecting the reasons of his aunt's apparently strange conduct : and his last words before he went to his work, were to charge his wife to have every thing ready for his journey on the morrow.

Bitterly did Alice now lament the folly of her conduct, and gladly would she have disclosed the whole truth to her husband, but for the threats of the fairy.

The day was fast closing when the wretched woman, unable to go on with her usual occupations, was sitting still unresolved what to do in her present dilemma, when a sudden feeling of terror came over her ; and, looking up, she beheld the genius Fortuna.

The fear which her presence inspired was, however, mingled with joy, for Alice hoped she should be relieved from her difficulty, and hear something of her child, for whom she most anxiously inquired.

“ Your child is well,” replied the fairy, “ and shall be safely restored at the time appointed ; doubt not but I will fulfil all my promises respecting her, provided you keep firm to your’s.”

“ But what will become of me ?” cried Alice ; “ how can I prevent my husband’s going to see

his relations, and so finding out that I have deceived him?"

"I will prevent his taking the journey, if you wish it," said the fairy.

"That is all I desire," replied Alice; "I am safe if Gillam does not see his aunt."

The fairy vanished, and the wife of Martyn now, thinking her troubles at an end, waited her husband's return with a mixed feeling of impatience and wonder. She was released from the misery and disgrace of being detected in a falsehood, but was anxiously curious to know by what means the journey was to be prevented.

Satisfied that it would be so, Alice prepared, with more than ordinary diligence, to forward the supper meal. All the addition that could be made to their usual homely fare was produced: she even anticipated broaching a cask of strong ale, and a pasty, reserved for a holiday-feast, was placed on the board.

All this took up time, and diverted her mind from perceiving how the hours went; but the evening closed in, and darkness gave the signal for apprehension.

She now went to the door, and vainly fed her hopes with imaginary forms, that seemed to

fit in the glimmering light of the distant horizon.

Returning to the decaying embers of her solitary hearth, the absence and wanderings of her thoughts scarce allowed her to feel the cold and chilling night air, which would otherwise have very sensibly affected her. For Alice, on most occasions, was much alive to the little domestic comforts which solaced the labours of the cottager; and was remarkable for the snug and comfortable way in which every thing was conducted in her little habitation.

Every moment increased her uneasiness; sometimes she suspected the promises of the fairy. At length a sound was heard, and the barking of Trailer was listened to with rapture. Alice sprang again to the door: the gloom prevented her from seeing objects at any distance; but the motions of the faithful dog reassured her, and announced the approach of his master, who now, with slow and painful steps, came forward, supported by his neighbour Jasper.

Alice flew to her husband, and eagerly inquired what accident had befallen him. "None," was the reply; all the account Gillam could give was, that while he was working in the field, a sudden

numbness came over him, and he fell helpless on the spot, where his friend found him, brought to his assistance by the barking of Trailer.

The grief and remorse of the wretched wife at this new and unexpected calamity, of which she but too truly judged herself the cause, may be well imagined. Again did Alice lament that she had ever sought *fairy favours*; but her regrets were vain,—she felt more than ever the necessity of keeping the fatal secret, for, after this terrible proof of the fairy's power, what might not be dreaded, if she incurred her displeasure.

Poor Martyn in the mean time wearied himself with conjectures as to the cause of his malady, attributing it to the dampness of the ground, or working in the rain, with twenty other notions of a similar kind.

Day after day passed on, but brought no amendment to the condition of Gillam, who found that his intended plan was completely frustrated. He suffered nothing from bodily pain, but the debility of his frame forbade all exertion.

But although the disappointment of his long anticipated expedition, and the necessity of remaining inactive, were grievous to be borne, an evil of greater magnitude soon presented itself in the

shape of *poverty*; for the little money which had been saved from his scanty earnings, and reserved for the intended journey, was now spent; and the Martyns were reduced to the greatest distress, the misery of which was increased to Alice, by knowing herself to have been the occasion of it.

Although the Martyns were what might be termed poor people; they had, by means of unremitting industry and good management, always preserved a certain independence which rendered them respectable; and, in the present instance, suffered less from the privations they were forced to undergo, than from the dread, notwithstanding all their endeavours, that they must at last have recourse to charity.

“ We have but this left to console us,” said Gillam; “ that the misfortune which has arisen is from no fault of our own.”

How little consolation observations of this kind could afford to his wife may be easily supposed. But the deepest source of grief to Martyn was, what would become of his child? and his frequent allusions to this added greatly also to the distress of Alice, as she did not dare communicate to him the hopes she herself entertained on that subject; for, notwithstanding all she had experienced from

the fairy's interference, Dame Martyn still at times looked forward with confidence to her promises respecting Ellen.

In the mean time every thing increased their misfortune, till, having disposed of all that was in their power, the evil so much dreaded could no longer be put off; and Alice at length set out for the purpose of endeavouring to obtain relief. In this moment of humiliation, when all the bright prospects of the future were swallowed up in the misery of the present, bitter were the repentant tears which the unhappy woman shed, as she bent her reluctant steps towards the stately mansion, at the gate of which she was about to solicit assistance.

The nearer Alice approached the place, the slower was her pace, as willing to delay the time to the utmost; but at length, having reached the gate of the avenue leading to the house, she was just about to raise the latch, when a rustling noise near her made her turn aside, and Alice beheld the genius of her hopes standing in her path, who, without speaking, presented her with a purse, and immediately disappeared.

The purse contained a sum which, though moderate, was sufficient for their present wants; and

Alice, overjoyed at this unexpected relief, was returning home to acquaint her husband with this piece of good fortune, when her pleasure was somewhat damped by the recollection that she must have recourse to some new deception in order to account for it.

To keep as close as possible to something like probability, she at first determined to tell Gillam, that the purse had been given to her; but Alice soon recollect ed that to say this would involve too many inquiries, for she could not pretend that a perfect stranger had been so generous; and Dame Martyn dared not risk mentioning the name of any person, lest it should at once lead to a discovery of the falsehood.

After some consideration, she at length concluded on saying that she had found it.

But now a fresh difficulty arose, for Gillam was too conscientious to appropriate to himself that which he considered the property of another. His wife, whose knowledge was more perfect on the subject, tried, but in vain, to conquer his scruples; and, although reduced to the greatest extremity, it was not till after much altercation, and some time had elapsed, that, as no one could be found to claim it, Gillam at last consented to make use

of the purse. Alice then, to her infinite surprise, and no less satisfaction, found, that whatever money she took out of it, the original sum was never diminished: but every thing connected with *fairy favours* had its proportion of evil; for the Martyns, who had hitherto been pitied by their neighbours, now found themselves objects of dislike and envy.

The story of the purse, which Gillam had told to all who visited him, with a view to find out its owner, gave rise to strange suspicions; for it was generally observed, that Alice carefully avoided the subject, and always appeared confused when it was spoken of: besides, the sum which the purse was said to contain, it was remarked, never could have maintained them so long a time. This circumstance rather puzzled Gillam himself, but he attributed it to his wife's good management, and thought it fortunate that the money held out, as, although he felt his strength gradually returning, he was not yet able to work.

The time was now at length arrived, when, according to agreement, the fairy was to restore Ellen to her parent; and Alice's joy, at once more seeing her child, made her forget all the trouble which her absence had occasioned.

The father was no less delighted with the won-

derful improvement in the person of his little girl ; but he experienced a second time a severe disappointment, in finding her unaccompanied by his aunt, for Gillam had for some time fed his hopes on the probability that, when the child returned, Dame Janet would come along with her, in which case all the purposes of his intended journey would be answered.

Ellen, however, appeared alone ; but Alice, grown expert in scheming, had prepared a plausible story for the ear of her husband, and he was given to understand that his daughter was brought home by a stranger, who stayed no longer than to deliver his message, which was a kind one, from his aunt, purporting that she had been much pleased with her young relation ; but not being able to come herself, she had placed the child in the care of a person who was journéying that way ; the whole concluding with love and good wishes.

This plan did not appear altogether improbable, and might have passed, and Gillam would have got over the vexation of not seeing Dame Janet, but there was one very singular circumstance that he could not understand ; which was, that his daughter, now four years old, was unable to give

any account of her journey, or where she had been.

To all his questions little Ellen only stared, as not knowing what her father meant, and, when he spoke to her about his aunt, she replied by alluding to some of their old neighbours, the only persons except her parents of whom she had any knowledge.

Martyn was much provoked by what he called the stupidity of the child.

“I was exceedingly sorry,” (said he to his wife, in a reproaching way) “that you ever suffered Ellen to go away; but I little thought how much reason I should have to regret it: the girl is grown a downright idiot.”

Dame Martyn said all she could about old people’s spoiling children.

“Doubtlessly,” she observed, “Ellen has had her own way too much with her aunt; she has not been used to be spoken harshly to, and the angry manner in which you question her stupifies and frightens the poor child.”

Gillam allowed there might be something in this, but he could not help observing another thing, which was that his wife was much more alarmed when he put any questions to his daughter

than the little girl herself, and so sedulously endeavoured to keep the child out of her husband's way, that Martyn felt all his suspicions revived, which, owing to matters of greater moment occupying his attention, had latterly given way.

From several circumstances, he felt doubtful if Ellen had indeed been to visit his relations, although he could not doubt she had been away; but what puzzled him most was, that the child herself did not appear conscious that she had been absent at all; and Martyn remarked, that if he had not been assured of the contrary, he should have supposed the girl had been in a dream.

This was in fact the case, for the child had been spell-bound by the fairy, in a profound sleep, so that, when she was returned to her mother, unconscious of the time that had elapsed, every thing appeared as familiar as if she had never left her place of abode. Thus, while on the one hand she seemed to recollect nothing, her memory, on the other, was as perfect as ever, in regard to circumstances which had happened previous to her leaving home.

In short, although the affair was far beyond his comprehension, Gillam felt assured there was something mysterious in it, which he determined,

at some future opportunity, to endeavour to unravel.

Gillam Martyn had by this time recovered the use of his limbs, and could now walk about, and pursue his labours in the field as usual ; so that Alice's conscience was at rest upon that ground : but, to counterbalance this satisfaction, she discovered, the very day on which her husband returned to his work, that the magic purse which had so long been their resource was exhausted. Alice, who having been accustomed to the late supply, had insensibly slipt into what might be called, in her station, extravagant indulgences, experienced some difficulty in returning to her former frugality. Poor Martyn, too, after living well, and doing nothing, found hard work and hard fare to be an evil which, till now, he had never anticipated.

But what was worse than all the rest, Gillam and Alice had no longer any confidence in each other ; for Dame Martyn, who had hoped that, now her daughter was returned, the affair of her absence would be forgotten, saw, on the contrary, that her husband's mind was more disturbed than ever.

Martyn was in fact once more meditating a

journey to his aunt ; but aware that, for some reasons of her own, his wife was extremely unwilling that he should go, and fearful lest she should interfere with his intentions, he determined this time to set off without her knowledge, leaving it to his friend Jasper, who was assisting in the plan, to inform Alice where he was gone.

Alice received the intelligence with astonishment and dismay ; for now to escape detection she deemed impossible. Unknowing what course to pursue, the unhappy woman felt her mind distracted with a variety of distressing apprehensions. To encounter the anger of her husband appeared to her a less evil than to encounter the anger of the fairy, should she disclose the truth to her husband ; yet, when he discovered that Ellen had not been at his aunt's, she knew not how to avoid doing so.

It was late in the evening of the day on which she had been informed of her husband's departure ; Alice, having put her child to bed, but unable to rest herself, had returned to the apartment below, where, unconscious how the hours fled, she sat absorbed in her own melancholy reflections, from which she was suddenly roused by the appearance of the fairy Fortuna.

“ Why,” said the genius, “ does the wife of Gillam thus vainly afflict herself ?”

“ Oh !” cried Alice imploringly, “ tell me but this—What am I to say to my husband when he returns, and finds that I have deceived him ?”

“ Rest satisfied,” replied the fairy, “ your secret is undiscovered.”—“ How,” said Dame Martyn, “ is that possible ? If—” but she was silenced by the genius, who, placing her finger on her lip, in token that she would answer no further interrogations, vanished from her sight.

Scarcely did Alice feel relieved by the knowledge that she should escape detection, than she was assailed by fears of another kind. There was an undefinable expression in the countenance of the supernatural being, which at the time made her shudder, and, when she recollect ed the terrible method by which Fortuna had prevented Gillam from taking his journey the first time, she trembled at the thoughts of what means the fairy might now take, to keep the mystery still undiscovered.

“ Alas !” thought the miserable wife, “ perhaps my husband may again be deprived of the use of his limbs ; even at this moment he may be lying helpless in the fields, without any one near to assist him.”

With forebodings of this and a similar kind did Alice continue to torment herself. The sun at length arose, when the cheering influence of daylight, and the balmy air of a mild spring morning, contributed in some degree to renovate her exhausted spirits; and she tried to assure herself that all would yet be well: but with her utmost endeavours she could not divest her mind of apprehension, and the interval of her husband's absence was passed by Alice, in sometimes indulging hopes, by looking forward to the promises of the fairy, but much oftener in fearful anticipations of what might have befallen Gillam.

A week had elapsed since his departure, and Dame Martyn was sitting one afternoon, calculating the probable time of her husband's return, and how many more tedious days must still intervene before her anxiety on his account could be relieved.

The door of her cottage was standing open, and Alice's meditations were sometimes interrupted by the merry shouts of the village children; Ellen was of the number, and the scene altogether brought forcibly to the mind of the mother the evening on which she first beheld the fairy. She gazed in fond admiration on her lovely child, who,

although habited in the same coarse garb as the rest of her companions, was yet conspicuous among them for grace and beauty. But notwithstanding the pleasure Dame Martyn anticipated from the idea that she should one day see her daughter attain that situation in life to which the advantages bestowed by the genius would entitle her, she nevertheless could not help sighing at the thought of how little real happiness she had hitherto gained from the fulfilment of her wishes; nor could she avoid comparing the distressing events which had occurred since the interference of the fairy, with the peaceful and happy tenor of her life before she indulged her ambitious projects, or listened to the suggestions of the genius Fortuna.

While these reflections were passing in her mind, Ellen came running with the joyful tidings that her father was returning.

Alice started up on receiving this intelligence, and, following with her utmost speed, the light steps of her child, soon reached a spot commanding a view of the road, where, directed by the finger of Ellen, she indeed beheld, to her infinite delight, William winding his way along the hill's side.

The joy of seeing her husband in safety was

proportioned to the anxiety she had previously experienced ; and Alice now thought her troubles were at an end. The dreaded journey, too, was over—she should no longer be haunted by the dread of having her secret discovered—in short, there appeared nothing further to apprehend, and the happiness of the moment seemed so fully to recompense her for all she had before endured, that Dame Martyn took herself to task for ever doubting either the power or the kindness of the fairy.

Notwithstanding the part she herself had acted, when assured of her husband's safety, she could not help entertaining a degree of resentment towards him, for his having undertaken this expedition without informing her of the matter ; and she was doubtful what reception she should give him. The feeling, however, was but momentary : Alice was too happy to be angry, and even to assume a look of gravity at their first meeting would have been a difficult task.

But the joy of seeing her husband, and the thoughts of the kind of welcome with which she should receive him, were all banished on his entrance.

From the deep gloom on Martyn's countenance,

and from his whole manner, it plainly appeared that some new calamity had taken place. The cause of her husband's affliction Alice learnt but too soon—his aunt was dead.

Gillam's excessive grief for the loss of a relation who had always shown him the affection of a parent, prevented him from perceiving the severe shock which the news gave his wife; and when he had somewhat recovered from the painful emotion occasioned by breaking the mournful intelligence to Alice, he proceeded to inform her of the following particulars:—

On the third day of his journey, and when he was within a few miles of the village where his aunt resided, Martyn was overtaken by a stranger who was journeying that way also, having lately become a resident in the place. From him Gillam learned that the village had a short time before been visited by a pestilential fever, which had swept off many of its inhabitants, amongst whom Dame Janet had been one of the earliest victims.

The grief and consternation with which Gillam heard this account may be well imagined. To all further inquiries, however, relative to his aunt, the stranger could give him no satisfactory

answer. Gillam, therefore, pursued his journey with a view to learn what he could with regard to his deceased relation, and also some other particulars, in respect to the late strange occurrences which had excited his anxiety. His intentions, however, were completely frustrated.

Upon reaching the village, all he could gather was a confirmation of what the stranger had told him. In that part of the hamlet in which Dame Janet had resided, the disorder had raged with so much violence, that those of her neighbours from whom he was likely to gain the information he required, had quitted the place, which appeared desolate and uninhabited.

Martyn concluded his narrative with saying, that finding no inducement to prolong his stay where pestilence might still infect the air, he immediately bent his melancholy steps towards home.

Alice listened with unspeakable horror to her husband's recital. "This, then," thought the wretched woman, "was the fairy's meaning, when she said the secret was safe; and this has been the direful method by which Gillam was prevented from coming to the knowledge of it!" And now, in all the agony of remorse, to have

made a full confession to her husband would have been some alleviation to the misery she endured; yet, deep as was her repentance for having leagued herself with the genius, Alice still felt herself so enthralled by the power of this inflexible being, that she dared not risk the consequence of disobeying her commands.

Lost peace of mind and a wounded conscience were thus the price at which Alice had purchased *fairy favours*.

Gillam's sorrow for the death of his aunt was deep and sincere, but in time it gave way to the occupations and concerns of his family. Nothing, however, could afford consolation to the wretched Alice, and her settled melancholy gave great anxiety to her husband, who endeavoured, though vainly, to discover the cause. All attempts of the kind served no other purpose than to add to the distress of Alice; and although, on this account, Gillam forbore to pursue the point, yet it contributed to his uneasiness, by confirming former suspicions; as it evidently appeared, that the source of his wife's grief was connected with his deceased relation, and equally so with the absence of Ellen.

All who knew them were at a loss to account

for the lamentable change which had taken place in the once happy home of this industrious pair. Alice no longer took any interest in the concerns of her family: the cottage, formerly so neat and trim, looked neglected; the garden was overgrown with weeds; there was no longer a welcome for the wayfaring traveller, who sighed as he passed the now-closed door, supposing, from the silence and desolation which prevailed, that the once kind and hospitable inhabitants had quitted the place.

Ellen, in the meantime, grew up all that the most fond and anxious parent could desire, both in beauty of person and sweetness of disposition: from the former Alice could derive no satisfaction, and the admiration which her daughter excited in all that beheld her, to which the mother had once looked forward with pride and delight, now gave the unhappy woman only an additional pang, by reminding her of the fairy's gift, and all its fatal consequences.

Twelve years had now rolled on; Ellen became of an age to take an active part in the concerns of the house, and things began to wear more the appearance of comfort from her assistance.

Alice's estrangement of mind, though a constant source of grief to her family, had become so

habitual, that it ceased to alarm them in the degree it had formerly done; but Martyn, observing with regret how often the buoyant spirits of his child were damped by the contagious gloom which clouded her mother's brow, proposed one day taking Ellen to a neighbouring fair, by way of recreation.

Alice, who seldom took much notice of what was going forward, expressed, on this occasion, a degree of satisfaction at the thoughts of their going, which added greatly to the pleasure felt by Ellen, who joyfully prepared to accompany her father to the scene of gaiety.

As the evening drew on, Dame Martyn, who rarely stirred out of doors, feeling in herself an uncommon degree of restlessness, was induced to seek relief by walking abroad. She had not proceeded far, when her ears were assailed by the shouts of mirth and laughter, from those who, in high glee, were returning from the fair. The sounds of merriment struck painfully on the mind of Alice; for she thought of the time when, with a light heart and a clear conscience, she had made one of the happy throng. To escape as quickly as possible from the gaiety which so ill accorded with her feelings, she turned into a

lane leading by a circuitous path to her habitation.

The evening was remarkably mild; scarcely a leaf stirred among the branches, and the moon, rising in tranquil majesty, shed its soft light on all the surrounding objects. The serenity of the scene was delightfully contrasted with the one she had just quitted, but, though that had annoyed, this did not sooth her; and Alice gazed with a vacant eye on the calm beauty of the landscape; Although she derived no enjoyment from the sight, her steps lingered as if she was unwilling to reach her home. At length, however, approaching her cottage, the trees which grew beside it appeared to cast a deeper shade than ordinary upon her little habitation; and a feeling of terror, for which she could not account, made Alice for some time hesitate to enter. With a trembling hand she at last ventured to lift the latch—all was as usual—“it is only,” thought she, “my guilty conscience which raises these needless alarms.” At that instant a bright and resplendent light illuminated the apartment, and in the next Alice beheld the genius who had so long held the power over her destiny. Not the most hideous or terrific spectre could have inspired the wife of

Gillam with more horror and aversion than did this splendid vision.

Without appearing to notice the fear which her presence inspired, the fairy, with a smiling countenance, thus addressed the terrified Alice :—

“ At length I am come to bring you consolation—set your heart at rest with the knowledge that life and death are not at my disposal ; and that the fate of her whom you have so long and deeply deplored was beyond my control.”

To be thus suddenly relieved from a load which had laid so heavily on her conscience at first almost bewildered the senses of Alice.

“ But why,” said she, as if half doubting the fairy’s assurance, “ why was I left all this time to suffer from so dreadful an idea ?”

An expression like that of vexation disturbed, for a moment, the features of the fairy, and a slight indication of anger crossed her brow.

“ Alice,” said she, “ I am compelled by an irresistible power to answer your question : know, then, that what you have for twelve years suffered, from the supposition of being instrumental to an event that happened in the course of nature, was the punishment incurred by your seeking, through unlawful means, to pry into the future, and to

counteract the natural course of human affairs. You have still a choice. If, after what you have experienced, you are disposed to forego the advantages of rank and fortune, which it is in my power to bestow, you are at liberty to disclose the secret, so long and painfully guarded, which will be the means not only of relieving your own mind, but will also restore to you the confidence of your husband.—But," added the fairy, and, as she spoke, the jewel on her breast, which had hitherto shed only a feeble ray, blazed forth in all its splendour, "remember that, in that case, all you have endured has been in vain. You will have deceived and made your husband unhappy, and will have yourself suffered the pangs of remorse, without having effected any purpose. Ellen, whose beauty might add lustre to the most exalted rank, will, in the end, become the wife of an obscure peasant. Now, ere you resolve, behold what might be the destiny of your daughter!" and, saying this, she held a mirror to the view of the astonished mother, who saw, reflected in it, her child superbly habited, and attended by slaves, dressed in the gorgeous costume of the East, whose homage she received with the air of a princess. The apartment in which she

was seated glittered with every costly decoration that gold, united with the labours of the loom, could supply.

Alice was literally enchanted with the sight of splendour so far beyond all that she could have imagined. A few moments before, what would she not have sacrificed to be assured that she had been in no wise accessory to the death of Janet, that she might regain her husband's confidence, that she might be able, with a conscience lightened of its burden, again to enjoy the social habits of her former life? But no sooner was she at liberty to resume these blessings, than her thoughts experienced a sudden revolution; and, as she gazed with eager eyes on the magic illusion which the fairy presented to her, every idea seemed to centre in the hope of seeing the splendid vision realized; and she again gave herself up to the guidance of her potent visitor.

“ Be it so,” said the fairy; “ it now remains that we obtain the consent of your daughter, as my power can be exercised only on those terms; for Ellen’s disposition is of a kind calculated to counteract the golden views which may be laid open to her choice. At present, she has not a wish beyond her lowly station: it must be your care,

therefore, to inspire your child with an ambition to appear in a more elevated rank: above all, you must endeavour to check any growing attachment for those of her own state, which might prove an obstacle to her future advancement. Farewell! on the first day of the new moon, twelve months hence, we meet again, and then the fate of Ellen will be decided." Here the genius vanished from the sight of Alice, who almost at the same instant heard the voice of Gillam and her daughter, who had just returned.

There was still, however, the secret to preserve, and Alice was aware that some precaution would be necessary, in order that the transition which had taken place in her mind might not appear too sudden. It was not, however, altogether in her power to conceal the joy she now felt: but whatever surprise Gillam and his daughter might experience at the change, which, though qualified on the part of Alice, was still too apparent not to be observed, the former was too prudent to disturb the present tranquillity, by any needless inquiry as to the cause; for Martyn, having been of opinion for some time that his wife's intellects were deranged, would not risk any question or allusion, to her late melancholy state, lest it should be the

means of occasioning, in any degree, the return of her malady.

Supper was now prepared, and seldom has the most luxurious feast afforded such enjoyment as was felt by each individual of this now happy family, as they sat down to their frugal repast.

The door and window of the cottage were thrown open, to admit the softened temperature of the atmosphere, which breathed refreshment after the close of a sultry day: yet, neither was the air more soft and balmy, nor was the song of the nightingale more sweetly melodious, than they had been at other times, when those who now inhaled the one, and listened to the other, with such delight, had not heeded their soothing and kindly influence. As if suddenly awakened to a sense of pleasure, every circumstance heightened their enjoyment; and there was also such an expression of affectionate content reflected in each other's looks, that Ellen thought the present moment the most blissful of her life.

The happiness of Martyn's family was, for some time, uninterrupted, and might have continued so, but for the restless spirit of ambition, which, now that she was no longer a prey to remorse, began again to work powerfully in the breast of

Alice, who, remembering the words of the fairy, looked upon Philip, the son of their neighbour Jasper, with a jealous eye. His frequent visits to their cottage gave her much uneasiness; for it was but too evident to Dame Martyn, that an attachment was taking place between the young man and her daughter, which, as it appeared sanctioned by her husband and the father of Philip, she knew not well how to oppose.

One evening, as Gillam and his wife were sitting alone together, Dame Martyn took the opportunity of opening her mind upon the subject, by lamenting that there was no better prospect for her darling Ellen, than that of becoming the wife of a neighbouring peasant.

“ How ? ” said Gillam. “ What is our situation ? and what right have we to look above ourselves ? The lad is honest, industrious, and obedient to his parents : what security for the future happiness of our child would you wish ? ”

All Martyn’s remonstrances were lost upon Alice, who kept firm to her point, and urged every argument in her power to bring her husband over to her opinion, which was, that her daughter’s beauty might give her a claim to a more exalted station. She backed her opinion by enu-

merating a variety of instances in which attractions, far inferior to those of Ellen, had been the means of raising their possessors from the lowest to the highest rank in life.

Although Gillam felt angry with his wife for her pertinacious adherence to the same foolish notions which had so long ago been a matter of contention between them, yet, as Alice's late mental sufferings had, in a great degree, impaired her health, he would not, in the present instance, venture further to irritate her, by expressing all he thought upon the subject; and Ellen coming in shortly after, the conversation dropped.

Dame Martyn, however, mistaking her husband's forbearance for acquiescence, congratulated herself on her success, on having, as she thought, gained her point. Her next object was to impress the mind of her daughter with an idea of the happiness attendant on wealth and splendour, and also to induce her to bestow every possible care on the decoration of her person; for which purpose, all that the slender means in her possession could supply, she lavishly expended on the dress of Ellen.

Little, however, was effected by this, for Alice perceived that, with whatever attention and in-

terest her daughter listened to the oft-repeated story of Flora Simons, it never appeared to excite in her the least wish to obtain a similar advancement; nor did the pleasure which Ellen took in displaying a new riband, ever lead her to repine at not possessing more costly ornaments.

But notwithstanding that Ellen seemed calculated by nature, as well as inclination, for the humble station in which she was placed, yet Alice, to justify, in her own mind, the part she was acting, would fain have persuaded herself, that her child was formed to adorn a more elevated rank.

As the fairy had prophesied that love in humble life might prove an obstacle to Ellen's future fortune, Alice thought, if she could once effect a separation between the lovers, the chief impediment to the fulfilment of her own wishes would be removed. Dame Martyn's aim was, now, to prejudice Philip in the mind of her daughter; but although this was not in her power, yet the knowledge of her mother's dislike to him gave Ellen the deepest concern, and occasioned, unconsciously to herself, a degree of constraint in her manner towards Philip, for which he was wholly at a loss to account.

While things were in this situation, the nature of Martyn's employment prevented his visiting his neighbour Jasper so often as he had been accustomed to do; so that, without any apparent cause, a gradual coolness took place between the families.

In the meantime, Philip sought an opportunity of coming to an understanding with Ellen, with respect to what he thought a shyness which had taken place on her part; but as she could give him no explanation, but such as would make him think ill of her mother, Ellen chose rather, for the present, to bear the blame of appearing capricious, than expose to her lover her parent's unjust prejudices.

It was within a few months of the period when the fairy had engaged to fulfil her promise, that Philip, by the death of a distant relation, came into the possession of some considerable property, on the first intelligence of which the young man hastened to the dwelling of his intended bride, to communicate the agreeable tidings. Dame Martyn alone was in the way, to whom Philip opened all his future plans; and, in the ardour of affection, promised all that the most sanguine expectations of one in the situation of Alice could frame, and which, but for the more brilliant

prospects raised by the fairy, would have been a vision of happiness far beyond any thing the fond mother could have hoped for.

But the idea of seeing her daughter united to one whom she loved, and who was worthy of her choice, placed above the reach of poverty, yet not altogether removed from that happy, though humble sphere within which all Ellen's wishes were bounded, could not induce Alice to give up the more splendid views she had in contemplation.

Accustomed to dissimulation, however, Dame Martyn congratulated the young man on his good fortune, with an appearance of cordiality; and, understanding from him, that he should shortly be under the necessity of making a journey for the purpose of settling the affairs of his deceased relation, and finding that the business would engage him beyond the period when the destiny of her daughter would be finally fixed, by the fulfilment of the fairy's promise, she thought she had now an opportunity of effecting a purpose which she had long meditated.

Dame Martyn accordingly entreated Philip to comply with a request she was about to make, the reason for which she could not at present reveal: this was, that until his return he would neither

visit their cottage, nor attempt to see or speak to her daughter.

The condition was hard, and the request so strange, that although it came from the mother of Ellen, Philip made some difficulty in acceding to it. But Alice assured him so firmly, that what she now asked was for the future welfare of her child, for whose sake she trusted he would comply with what she required, that Philip, not comprehending the ambiguity of her expression, at length, though with great reluctance, gave his word to act according to her wishes, and, further, to keep what had passed a profound secret.

Philip now took his leave, and Alice rejoiced at having thus far accomplished her intentions of separating the lovers. During all this time Ellen had been on an errand to the neighbouring village, where she soon learned the good fortune that had fallen to Philip.

The pleasure which she felt on hearing this news was not so much from the acquisition of wealth it would bring to her lover, as from the hope that the improved fortune of Philip would reconcile her mother to their union. Feeling the firmest assurance that no change of circumstances would make any alteration in his sentiments to-

wards her, she looked forward with more of hope to the future, than she had for some time past experienced:

With her mind thus occupied, Ellen was returning home, when, at the distance of half a field's length, she perceived Philip coming towards her. At the moment that she quickened her steps to meet him, she saw him stop short, and turn to cross the meadow in another direction.

There was something remarkable in this—perhaps he did not know her; but that was not very likely, for he had stood for a moment, as if to ascertain who it was before he quitted the regular path. In short, it might be any thing but the wish to avoid her; and Ellen took herself to task for too scrupulously weighing the actions of one of whose worth she was so well convinced. But all her endeavours to think no more upon the subject were unavailing; the incident kept continually recurring to her mind.

Ellen had been anxious to reach her home; for, not aware that her mother was already apprised of the circumstance of Philip's good fortune, she wished to see what effect the intelligence would have on her; but the strange occurrence which had just taken place had given such a

check to her spirits, that when she had arrived at home the power of speaking on the subject seemed to have left her; and Dame Martyn, it may be imagined, was in no haste to communicate the news she had just heard from the mouth of the young man himself: and thus the affair, though known to both mother and daughter, was not mentioned by either.

Evening arrived, and, when Gillam came home, observing the unusual seriousness of Ellen's countenance, he fancied that what he had to acquaint her with would presently dissipate the gloom that seemed to hang over her; but what was his surprise to be told, for reply to his information, that she had heard the news before. Dame Martyn, too, wondered that her daughter should not have spoken to her upon the subject; but she observed, with much satisfaction, that the good fortune of Philip had not the effect of elating her child in the degree she expected: and Alice, not knowing the true reason of her dejection, began to hope that, in reality, she did not take any very deep interest in the young man's prosperity.

"I rather wonder," said Martyn, in the course of the evening, "that Philip does not come over to tell us of his good luck; it's very likely, how-

ever, that his time is much taken up ; and yet," continued he, after a pause, " he might find an opportunity."

Although the same thoughts, at the same moment, were passing in the mind of Ellen, yet her father's remark gave her an additional pang, as showing that suspicions had taken possession of his imagination, similar to those also which she was vainly endeavouring to banish from her own.

The next day and another went over, and still Philip came not : all conjectures on the probable cause of this alienation were nearly exhausted. The idea, however, that some accident might have befallen him began to take possession of Ellen's mind. Martyn's uneasiness, as well as his daughter's, was extreme ; he would willingly have gone over to ascertain the cause of the young man's so strangely absenting himself, but the difference of fortune which now existed between them made the honest pride of Gillam revolt at the idea of making the first advances.

Things could not long remain in this state, as both father and daughter suffered too much from this apparent neglect ; and Ellen at length, no longer able to endure the painful suspense, solicited her father to investigate the seeming

mystery; observing, at the same time, to her parent, that nothing but accident or illness could have prevented Philip from coming. Martyn shook his head.

“ My child,” said he, “ I grieve to awaken you to a painful conviction; but I feel myself too fully assured, that either wealth has entirely changed the character of Philip, or that his parents entertain higher views for their son than formerly.”

“ Had the fortune come to me,” continued Gillam, “ my first care would have been to have let our neighbour Jasper and his son understand that it made no difference in our sentiments with regard to them: and, judging, therefore, by my own feelings, I thought that Philip ought to have been equally prompt in acquainting us with his improved circumstances; but when so many days had passed, I began to think as you did, that something accidental had occurred, and that I might be indulging an ill-timed resentment. This morning, therefore, I resolved that, when my day’s work was over, I would learn the cause of this estrangement.

“ Returning, by the other side of the common, I passed near enough to Jasper’s cottage to per-

ceive him conversing with his son, in his usual manner. As I came nearer, they retired somewhat hastily within doors: this might be accidental, as I am not certain they observed me; but, after what has happened, one is apt to be suspicious; and I could not help fancying there was a wish to avoid me. However this might be, I have seen sufficient to be convinced, that neither accident nor sickness has been the occasion of Philip's absenting himself. I feel, however, a degree of satisfaction in not having had the mortification of subjecting ourselves to any additional slight from a personal interview."

Ellen acquiesced in her father's opinion; but it was evident, from the emotion which was expressed on her pallid features, that the blow had struck deep: still, however painful it might be to the father to inflict any further misery on the already wounded feelings of his child, he yet felt the necessity of no longer suffering her to attribute the neglect of her lover to any but what he believed to be the true cause.

The grief of Ellen began now visibly to impair her health; and Alice, aware that she had been mistaken in the supposition of her daughter's indifference, became seriously alarmed, as she

observed the colour fast fading from the cheek of her beloved child. The wish once more arose in her mind that she had never listened to the promises of the fairy, and she half formed the resolution of disclosing the part she had taken in producing what appeared mysterious in the conduct of old Jasper's son: but this would lead to the development of more than she dared to reveal; as, by disobeying the fairy's injunctions, she might lay herself and family open to the resentment of a being, whose power she had already experienced, and could not but continue to dread. Besides which, the brilliant vision which the genius had displayed to her still kept recurring to her imagination; and the infatuated mother cherished the hope, that the fortune that awaited Ellen would presently reconcile her child to her own ambitious views.

The idea which Martyn had suggested to his daughter, that the parents of Philip might entertain different prospects for him than heretofore, yet brought a degree of consolation with it: as she still clung to the hope, that her lover's affections remained unaltered; and, the more Ellen reflected on all circumstances, the more probable did this appear: for, in the event of his father's

opposing his wishes, the absence of Philip was easily accounted for, in the pain and reluctance he would feel to expose the mercenary disposition of his parents: in a word, any thing was preferable to the thought that she was deserted or disregarded by him.

In an obscure village, like that which the Martyns inhabited, every thing that occurs is known; and it was soon understood, that in a few days the son of Jasper was to set out on his intended journey. Ellen now thought that, under all circumstances, he would endeavour to call on her before he went. It seemed so utterly impossible that Philip should leave his native place for some weeks without so much as taking leave of her, that the hope of seeing him amounted almost to certainty in her mind.

At this time Dame Martyn was not aware of what was passing in Ellen's heart, but flattered herself that the grief for the apparent neglect of her lover was beginning to subside; and with this confidence the mother looked forward with impatience to the period when the genius Fortuna would fulfil her promises.

The day on which Philip was to set off arrived, and still Ellen received no tidings from him; she

did not despair, however: there was a chance that something or other had taken place to delay his departure. But, her mind being in a state too disturbed to allow of repose, she arose at an earlier hour than usual, and opened the casement of her window, to admit the refreshing breeze of the morning; and, as her eye wandered over the surrounding landscape, she observed, at some distance, a man on horseback, slowly advancing along the road. The indistinctness of objects in the early dawn prevented her from recognising the person; but on his nearer approach she could no longer be uncertain—it was Philip! Her agitation became extreme, especially as, when arriving near the spot, he stopped his horse, and looked forwards to the cottage, as if irresolute whether to pass. She felt almost certain that he saw her; but determined that, if his own inclinations did not prompt his stay, though but for a momentary explanation of his inexplicable conduct, she would not, by any indication of recognition, bias his intentions.

Another instant decided the point—Philip urged his horse into a gallop, and was quickly out of sight.

This incident was to Ellen a severe stroke;

for some time she wept over the disappointment : but such is the nature of true affection, that no sooner is one hope crushed than another arises ; and the circumstance of his stopping, and looking towards her dwelling, proved sufficiently that she was not forgotten ; and Ellen soon began to conjecture and frame excuses for his apparent neglect.

Nevertheless, the perturbation of her thoughts prevented her from pursuing her usual occupations ; and she passed the greater part of the day in wandering about, without any settled purpose. The last rays of the setting sun, as it shed its crimson light on the distant hills, and the sight of the herdsmen bringing home their cattle, reminded Ellen of the lateness of the hour ; and she was bending her way homewards, when the sound of some one hastily approaching, and a soft voice calling on her name, arrested her footsteps.

It was Jessy, the sister of her lover ; a little girl, about ten years old, of whom Ellen was exceedingly fond, and who, from the late estrangement of the families, she had not seen for some time.

“ Dear Ellen Martyn,” said the child, throw-

ing her arms round her neck, “ how glad I am to meet you ; but we are not far from home—you will come and see my father and mother—they will be so pleased.”

Ellen returned the child’s caresses ; but no entreaties could prevail upon her to accept an invitation in which she believed Jessy expressed her own wishes rather than those of her parents.

“ Well, then,” said the little girl, “ if you will not come home with me, I will go part of the way with you : I shall be glad of a walk this fine evening ; and we are all so dull at our house—we are all so uncomfortable ! ” Ellen could not help feeling the deepest interest in all that was said ; but pride and delicacy prevented her from questioning the child further than as to the general welfare of the family. Jessy replied they were all much as usual in health ; “ but,” continued she, “ we are not half so happy since my brother is become a rich man, as before ; and Philip is quite changed—do’nt you think so, too ? ”

“ I have not seen your brother, Jessy, since he has become a rich man,” replied Ellen.

“ Aye, I remember, my father said last night, he wondered what could be the reason that Philip never went to your house ; and he asked my bro-

ther, whether you and he had fallen-out; but he said, 'no.' And then mother asked him, if he did not mean to bid you good bye before he went away; but he looked vexed and angry, and said he could not, and then left the house; and I heard my mother say, how sorry she was for poor Ellen."

Here the conversation ended, and the child took leave of her companion, to return home. But, from what had passed, Ellen gathered sufficient to show her, that the parents of her lover had taken no part in influencing his conduct; and, in the conviction that Philip's desertion of her had been voluntary, the last ray of hope was extinguished in her breast.

In the meantime, Alice, who had been somewhat alarmed at the lengthened absence of her daughter, stationed herself at the door, anxiously waiting her return. Ellen at length appeared; but her slow step and altered look still further increased the apprehension of the mother; in reply to whose inquiries, Ellen related what had passed, and found a sensible relief in confiding the cause of her grief to her parent.

Though it was painful to Alice to witness the sorrow of her child, which she could easily have

removed, by explaining the real cause of Philip's conduct, yet she could not prevail on herself to forego the advantages that were to result from the promises of the fairy; hoping that, in the supposition of her lover's unworthiness, her daughter would soon learn to forget him, and seek her happiness in the more splendid fortune that awaited her.

The period so anxiously waited for by Dame Martyn at length arrived, at which the fairy was to fulfil her engagement. The weather had, for some time past, been gloomy and unsettled; but on this day, so important in Alice's estimation, every thing seemed to smile upon her hopes: the sun shone brightly—all was cheerful and animating.

Gillam went as usual to the labours of the field; and Alice, that nothing might prevent or interrupt her expected interview with the fairy, proposed to her daughter, that, as the weather was so uncommonly fine, she should take the opportunity of visiting a friend, alleging that change of scene would raise her spirits.

Although Ellen's sorrow was not of a kind to be alleviated by change of scene, yet, grateful for the motive which she believed had urged her parent to propose the plan, she consented to go,

and took leave of her mother with more than usual tenderness.

Alice was somewhat affected at the departure of her daughter, though she could not tell how to account for the emotion; and, after watching the receding steps of Ellen till she was lost to her sight, Dame Martyn turned to re-enter the cottage; when her attention was attracted by observing a number of persons assembled for the purpose of seeing the procession of a funeral.

From the strong indications of pity expressed by the spectators, it was evident that a more than common interest was excited; and, on inquiry, Alice learnt, to her consternation, that the lamented object was the beautiful, but ill-fated Flora, who, after a short period of hurried dissipation, at length experienced the entire neglect of her husband, accompanied by every mortification which could fall upon the victim of that neglect. Her sickness was that of the heart, and her last request was, that her remains might be deposited in her native place.

Such was the end of one whose exaltation from an humble rank first raised the ambition of Alice with regard to her own child: but, although she sincerely deplored the fate of the unfortunate

Flora, the shock Dame Martyn experienced in the news of her death arose less from commisera-
tion, than from the fearful contemplation that such might possibly be the fate of Eilen.

Alice, however, endeavoured to suppress these painful reflections; and, retiring into her cottage, she sat waiting the appearance of the fairy. The visits of the genius had at all times inspired her with a degree of terror; but, in the present instance, owing probably to the shock which she had received at the sight of Flora's funeral, her mind was more than usually agitated.

The day, however, advanced, and the fairy came not, although the hour was nearly arrived when Gillam would return from his labours.—“The genius has deceived me,” thought Alice—when, at that instant, although neither sound nor any other token gave notice of the fairy's approach, a sensation which thrilled through every nerve warned Alice of her presence.

The wife of Gillam looked up—it was, indeed, the genius Fortuna; but her appearance was different from what it had been at other times. Her countenance was serious, and even stern; she was enveloped in a dark-coloured mantle, and the bright jewel on her breast which had always

cast a splendour around her was no longer visible.

Unable to speak, and scarcely daring to breathe, Alice waited the behests of the fairy, who at length broke silence; and the fears of Dame Martyn subsided, and her hopes were confirmed, in the fairy's assurance that she was now come to fulfil her word, by placing Ellen in the possession of all the blessings which wealth could procure.

With every expression of heart-felt gratitude, did Alice thank the benevolent genius, and eagerly inquired when she might inform her child of the happiness which awaited her.

"Rest satisfied," replied the fairy, "with knowing your wishes will be accomplished: my promise extends no further than to bestow wealth and power on your offspring; a separation, however, must instantly take place. You will see her no more; the fortune that awaits her is in a far distant land; and, on the instant that Ellen consents to my proposal, she will be transported to the place of her future destination."

Alice shrieked at these words, and, in an agony of despair, implored the genius to retract the engagement; but it was in vain.

"Were I even inclined to yield to your entre-"

ties," said the genius, "it is not now in my power: the future destiny of Ellen depends on herself alone. I now go to offer her all that is most estimable in the eyes of mortals." And with these words the fairy disappeared, leaving the wretched mother to lament, in the bitterness of remorse, the consequences of her own inconsistent schemes for the aggrandisement of her child.

Nothing could exceed the surprise of Martyn on entering his habitation, to behold the distraction of his wife. That something dreadful had happened was his first supposition; but to his earnest and repeated inquiries, Alice only replied by frantically conjuring him to save her child from the power of the fairy.

From these incoherent ravings and entreaties for his forgiveness, Gillam could draw no other conclusion than that his wife's senses had again forsaken her. But while, under this idea, Martyn was endeavouring to calm what he believed to be imaginary fears, her malady did but gain ground; and, though it was some time before he could, in any degree, comprehend the cause of her affliction, yet at length, from her wild lamentations, and some allusions to past events, suspicions that had long lain dormant once more arose in his

mind; united with a dread, that some danger was, indeed, impending over his child. But the broken and confused expressions of Alice afforded him no distinct idea of what the danger was.

During the time of this dreadful suspense, the fate of Ellen was decided. It was on her return home from the visit her mother had urged her to make, that she encountered the fairy; not habited in the dusky garb, or wearing the threatening aspect with which she appeared to Alice, but in all the splendour of glittering attire, and with a countenance radiant with smiles.

The alarm of Ellen may be well imagined, for although, in common with her neighbours, the belief in fairies and apparitions had obtained root in her mind, yet the reality of such a visitor, in whatever guise it might appear, could not fail of striking terror into her youthful breast: but when this terror had in a degree subsided, and Ellen was sufficiently recovered to listen to the propositions of the fairy, it was then that the genius displayed to the imagination of Ellen all the advantages of an elevated rank, and all the felicity attendant on riches and power.

But, in the disposition of the young female she now addressed, neither ambition nor vanity had

any share: her fancy rose not to those giddy heights which had been the bane of her mother's tranquillity: a fatal example had also a few hours before been brought to her view, in the obsequies of Flora Simons, whose premature death made a deeper impression in the mind of Ellen, from her having been so often pointed out by her parents as an object of singular good fortune.

The offer, therefore, of wealth and power had not sufficient temptation, nor could all the subtle arguments of the genius bias her judgment: she therefore, with some agitation, yet with sufficient firmness, declined the *dangerous gifts*.

The tumult of her mind, and the efforts she had made to sustain this supernatural conference, proved too much for her strength; her eyes became dim, and she sunk senseless to the ground.

On recovering from her swoon, nothing of the vision remained: the moon shone bright on her path, and, with all the speed which fear could lend her, Ellen hastened to the shelter of her home.

Here the situation of her parents presented a spectacle almost as appalling as the one she had just witnessed. The delirious joy of her mother, and the mingled and fearful emotions of her fa-

ther, required an effort on her part to which she was scarcely equal: by degrees, however, the feelings of her father became more subdued; and his tender and parental solicitude calmed the perturbation of her mind, and enabled her to relate what had passed.

The mystery was now developed. From Ellen's account of her interview with the fairy, all that had appeared inexplicable in the past conduct and present discourse of Alice was now explained.

By slow and painful degrees did Gillam receive the conviction of what before he had but a vague suspicion; and his horror was inexpressible when he learnt that for so many years his wife had alienated herself from the confidence of her family, to hold intercourse with a forbidden agent.

But whatever might be his feelings, the unfortunate victim of ambitious credulity was no longer an object of resentment: the conflict of her mind, and the shock she had received in the apprehension of losing her child, were more than the already-weakened frame of Alice could recover from: even the joy of seeing Ellen restored came too late—the blow was struck—a few days terminated the life of this deluded woman, whose only

satisfaction in her last hour was the frustration of a scheme, in the endeavour to accomplish which she had incurred both guilt and misery.

Little more need be added. From Alice's confession the conduct of Philip had been fully justified. The friendship (which for a time had been interrupted) between the families of Gillam and Jasper was now re-established; and, when Ellen's grief had, in some degree, subsided, for the loss of a parent whose mistaken views of what might be for the real happiness of her child had led her out of the path of rectitude, the daughter of Gillam was united to the lover of her choice; and the happiness of her future days fully justified her rejection of *fairy favours*.

THE ADVENTURES OF A NEEDLE.



THE
ADVENTURES OF A NEEDLE.

THE leisure that I at present enjoy, in the snug retreat of a green satin housewife, induces me to give the history of my adventures to the world. It was in the month of October, in the year —, that I and some thousands of my fellows were sent from the manufactory of —, to one of the first shops in the famous city of London, where we doubted not but our useful qualities would be properly appreciated: in this, however, we were greatly disappointed; for it happened that a manufacturer had procured a patent for some fine gold and silver-eyed Needles, which were weekly puffed off in the newspapers, with a long list of their perfections. They were upheld neither to cut in the eye, nor to become blunt at the point; and, in the end, I believe, were warranted to work of themselves: but of this I will not be positive. The fame of these wonderful performers kept us

for months without seeing the light, as nobody thought of purchasing any other than the newly-advertised sort; and we began to fear that we should perish in rust, without ever being of use, when, one day, a lady came into the shop, and, after purchasing several articles, desired to see some Needles. She said she had heard much of the patent ones, and inquired if they were as good as they were reported to be. The master of the shop, without answering the question respecting them, pulled out the drawer in which we were kept; and, immediately producing us, assured the lady, that whatever might be said about the newly-invented Needles, if she wanted such as might be useful, he would recommend us, as some of the best that had ever been made. He went on describing our several good qualities; said we were equally fit for heavy or light work, being as strong as the Whitechapel Needles, and not so clumsy. I own I was almost ashamed to hear myself so praised, especially by one who knew nothing about the matter; but still thought it kind in him to endeavour to raise humble merit, and quell the pride of the gold and silver-eyed upstarts. This, however, was not exactly the case; for no sooner had he secured the sale of us,

than, before the lady, who was now leaving the shop, could reach the door, he whipped out another drawer, and begged she would allow him to show her the patent ones. The lady said she would look at them, just out of curiosity, but should not buy any, as those she had already purchased were so good. The shopkeeper, however, had determined otherwise; and now, like any lawyer, began to turn about. He said it was very true nothing could be better than those she had bought; still he would recommend her to try the others—every body approved of them: they were a remarkable invention. In short, after declaring that we were the best, he now endeavoured to prove that there were still better; and it appeared, that what we thought a generous wish to raise us into notice, was nothing but a contrivance to get us off his hands. The lady accordingly took some of our rivals, and now left the shop with her purchase. We were highly pleased with falling into the hands of so respectable a person; and, on our way, made various conjectures upon our future destination—as to what kind of work we should be set about—whether the lady wore spectacles—and whether we were for her especial use, or for that of any other person.

By this time our mistress arrived at home; where the first thing she did was to dispose of us in a richly-embroidered needle-case; which, along with a new thimble and scissors, was deposited in a fine work-bag. I now began to suspect that we were intended to make part of a present; and this proved to be the case. A short time after, the niece of the lady, a child for whom the gift was intended, came to pay her a visit. The work-bag lying on the table soon attracted the attention of the little girl; which her Aunt observing, said, "That is for you, Julia; knowing you to be fond of work, and a very good needle-woman, I made this little purchase, which I hope you will like." The young lady received the present with much gratitude, and was greatly delighted. She opened and examined it a dozen times in less than an hour; but I was rather mortified to see, that she admired the bag much more than its contents. The only remark she made upon us was, "How very neatly you have arranged these Needles, Aunt; it would be quite a pity to disturb them." "I hope you will not think so, my dear," replied her Aunt, "as that was not my intention when I placed them there: they were recommended to me as being particu-

larly good ; and I hope you will prove them to be so." The young lady was then desired to play and sing, which she did with great readiness ; and I thought if her fingers could manage a needle with as much dexterity as they did the keys of the instrument, I could not have fallen into better hands. After she had done playing, a walk was proposed, and we were left for the rest of the day. In the evening, the work-bag, along with a doll, were packed up, this last being a present for her sister, and Julia returned home in high spirits. The presents were displayed to the family : the rich work-bag was admired ; the scissors and thimble came in for their share of applause ; but we had again the mortification to be overlooked ; and, knowing our consequence, and that all the rest were of little use without us, we could not but wonder at the slight. The only person who seemed aware of our value was the child for whom the doll had been bought. "What a stock of Needles!" cried she ; "I wish they were mine. I think, Julia, you might give me your old housewife now that you have got such a handsome new one." "Indeed (said Julia) I shall do no such thing ; my Aunt has given you a new doll, and I think you ought to be satisfied." "You

are a sad little miser (said her mother); I was myself going to propose, that you should give Emma your old one." "If I do, Mamma, the thread will all be wasted, and the needles lost, in less than a week: she never took care of any thing in her life; however, if you desire it, I will give it her." "No (replied her mother), I do not desire that you should give any thing away grudgingly; so say no more about it, nor let your aunt's kindness become a matter of contention." Julia looked very sullen, but made no answer: so here the subject dropped. I soon found what her mother had said was true; my young mistress had a great deal of the miser in her disposition. All her playthings were kept locked up, and nobody indulged with more than a sight of them.

Months had now passed away, and there appeared as little probability of my coming into use as if I had remained in the shop, when I found myself very unexpectedly released. One day her little sister, being in want of a needle, having lost one and broken another, thought it would be in vain to apply to Julia for a third; and, happening to come into the room, saw the drawer in which the bag was kept, left open. The opportunity of helping

herself was not to be neglected. This was very wrong; but I must do her the justice to say, that she intended to replace the needle when she had done with it. No sooner had she opened the thread-case, than I guessed my fate, as I happened to be the first on the row. I trembled at falling into the hands of one so careless, thinking how soon she might lose me. My fears were presently realized. She had just drawn me from my station, and before she could secure me in a convenient place, her sister's foot was heard upon the stairs. In Emma's hurry to fold up the thread-case, I was dropped in the crevice of the boards! Julia, coming in at this moment, and seeing her sister's confusion, instantly imagined the cause, and accused her of having been at the drawer. The little girl told the truth directly; begged her sister not to be angry—said she had not hurt any thing—had only taken one needle, which she would return to her again. Knowing Julia's mercenary disposition, I was in hopes of being sought for; but here again I was mistaken: for, finding the bag, and all belonging to it, in proper order, she told Emma she did not mind a needle; but observed, that she should take good care in future not to leave her drawer open. They then left the

room, and nothing could be more hopeless than my situation. All my prospects seemed closed at once, as it was more than probable that the crevice in which I lay would be filled up with dust, and I should be buried for ever.

Though it had not been through any fault of my own that this misfortune had overtaken me, I could not help reproaching myself for my former discontent. A few hours before, I should have thought any change agreeable; now, the greatest happiness I could imagine was to be once more secure in the needle-case. I began to be hopeless of attracting regard, when, as the servant was sweeping the room one morning, her keen eye discovered me. It is needless to describe the joy I felt on seeing her stoop to pick me up; but this was not so easy as either she or I imagined. The first attempt she made to lay hold of me pushed me as far again into the terrible abyss; the next trial plunged me so deep that nothing but my eye appeared. What I suffered between hope and fear it is impossible to tell, for I expected every moment the girl's patience would be exhausted, and that she would leave me to my fate. Luckily, however, the more the difficulty increased, the more she seemed determined to conquer it;

and, at last, was clever enough to think of taking a pin to her assistance, with which, in an instant, she drew me up ! I felt assured, from the pains she had taken to obtain me, that I should be properly valued by her ; but, to my surprise, after trying my point, and looking through my eye, to see that I was perfect, she stuck me so carelessly on the side of her gown, that I was in the utmost danger of again being lost. Nor was I released from this jeopardy till night, when Mary (for that was the servant's name) undressed herself to go to bed ; and, finding me still sticking in her gown, took the trouble to quilt me into a pin-cushion, for which I was most grateful ; as, after being in such imminent danger, any place where I could be safe seemed eligible. I was, however, soon tired of being kept in her pocket, along with half-pence, an old knife, and a brass thimble ; and, indeed, my companions in the pin-cushion were far from being agreeable to one who had been used to better society ; for they were composed of crooked pins, and a couple of vulgar worsted needles. I found, too, there was but little chance of my being made use of ; for Mary had scarcely any time for needle-work. Many times, when she was about to take me out for some trifling purpose,

such as fastening a string to her apron or tacking a bow on her cap, an officious pin obtruded its service, which was always accepted instead of mine. Now, though I would not depreciate the value of any thing, and know that, on some occasions, pins may be useful, yet I must say, in general, that they are thought too much of. I have been often provoked to hear the ridiculous exclamations of people, "I would give the world for a pin!" or, "what shall I do for want of a pin?" and then, in this terrible distress, if any one should be kind enough to offer such a rarity, it is received with as much gratitude as if it were a pearl; when it is well known to be worth scarcely the sixteenth part of a farthing. I am convinced that the use of pins often makes people idle and untidy; when, for the saving of what they call trouble, they have recourse to the temporary expedient of fastening, with pins, that which ought to be sewed. It is well known, also, how mischievous they are to children, scratching and tearing them on all occasions. Indeed, I cannot see why some contrivance might not be found to do without them altogether.

But to return to my story;—having now, for some weeks, been buried in Mary's pocket, I be-

gan to lose all hope of quitting it, when, one night that she was sitting up later than usual (waiting the return of her master and mistress from the opera), by the light of a blinking candle, I made my first attempt at work. Mary had been dozing over the fire a good while before it occurred to her that she could make any better use of her time; but, hearing the clock strike, and knowing it would be near two hours before the family returned, she set courageously to work, stirred the fire, snuffed the candle, and got her working materials together: she then began to look over a parcel of stockings that wanted mending. Trembling at the idea of the thick cotton I must carry if she employed me to darn them, I thought it would be very hard if my first employment should be so little befitting me. After scanning the stockings, which she did not seem much inclined to attack, she dived her hand again into her work-bag, and pulled out a piece of muslin. Hesitating for some time what she should do, the love of finery prevailed; the stockings were tumbled again into the bag, and, to my great satisfaction, I was employed to hem the muslin. Mary was a quick worker; I was new and glib; so we completed a still before the return of her master and mistress.

Another long interval of time elapsed before my services were again required. At length, some caps being in request, for the making of which Mary found she had not sufficient time, I was sent, together with proper instructions, to a younger sister, who was at school. Arrived there, my new mistress, presuming to say I was too thick for her use, took the liberty of exchanging me with one of her school-fellows. This I considered a great affront; but my good humour was restored by my present possessor, who seemed to have a proper sense of my value, declaring I was the best Needle she had ever used. Lucy Lustre was working a large sampler, for which I just suited her purpose; and, from the care she took to quilt me in her housewife when she had done stitching, I felt assured I should have the satisfaction of finishing what I had begun. For some time we went on to our mutual satisfaction. There was a fine strawberry border all round the sampler; the alphabet, in various stitches, preceded the appropriate verse; and, having come to the middle, there was a long consultation whether it should be filled up by Noah's ark or an orange-tree: the latter was agreed upon, as it could be done the sooner, for Lucy was anxious to see her work com-

pleted. Accordingly, a fine large tree was placed in the centre. My young mistress had worked vary hard for two days, to get it finished; and it was now done all but the oranges, when a difficulty arose of which she had not thought: this was no other than the want of orange-coloured silk. How Lucy came to forget such a thing I am at a loss to imagine; but so it was. No colours nearer than scarlet and pale yellow presented themselves. All her school-fellows routed their bags, but in vain; every colour came to hand, save the one in request; and the determination was to finish it out of hand. One advised her to hang lemons on the trees: but this did not suit her ideas—they were not fit to eat. Another proposed red silk, and then they would be cherries: this was esteemed a bright thought, and adopted accordingly. The work was going on well, when one of the young critics found out that for cherries they would be of an enormous size: this objection had not occurred to Lucy, who began to fret, when the little girl who had first suggested the plan, now observed, it was of very little consequence, for no person who was fond of cherries would object to their being as large as oranges; and thus the obstacle was removed: and, that

things might bear a proportion to each other, a bird of Paradise, as large as an eagle, was perched on one of the branches.

The sampler being more than two-thirds done, my anticipation of the admiration it would excite, and the share of praise I should have in the performance, was most untowardly checked, by perceiving that Lucy grew weary of her task. The frequent exclamations of how tired she was! how glad she should be when it was done! were certainly very mortifying to me; still I had not the least idea that, after so much pains bestowed, she would leave it unfinished; but to my great surprise, one morning, instead of pursuing her work, she carefully papered up the sampler, and put it away! Her companions asked her if she did not wish to finish it? "Oh yes (said Lucy), I shall finish it some time or other; but I am going to net a purse—that is such pleasant work, I think I shall never be tired of it."

Having declared the same when she began her sampler, I expected her school-fellows would have reprobated her fickleness; but I found they were all of the same mind—purse-making had become the favourite employment.

Soon after this a new scholar made her appear-

ance at our school ; a child of five years old : she was brought by her mother, who said she would be much obliged if Mrs. —— would attend particularly to her work ; " for (added she), Ellen is so extremely awkward with her needle, that though we have been trying for these three months to teach her to hem, it was to no purpose ; so I thought best to put her under your management." The schoolmistress was too well accustomed to the unreasonableness of parents (who, when they can effect nothing at home, expect every thing to be done at school), to be surprised at this. On little Ellen being set to work, her needle was considered too small ; an exchange was proposed, and I was substituted. My vexation was not slight on finding myself in the hands of an urchin who knew no more how to use me than if I had been a pitchfork. All that her mother had said about her awkwardness was but too true. She grasped me in her fingers as tight as if she had known my wish to escape. With the most persevering patience did the schoolmistress endeavour to teach her to hold her needle properly ; but the moment she was left to herself she went her own way to work ; and, after holding me in her hot moist hand till my polish was nearly destroyed, she

would take an immense long-stitch, and drive me through with such violence that I expected every moment to be snapped. In short, we were the mutual plague of each other; and although I felt provoked at her ill-using me, I could not help, at times, pitying the poor little wretch, of whom I was made the torment. By dint of great perseverance on the part of the governess, Ellen, in a few weeks, made some improvement; but not enough to satisfy the parent, who (as was before observed) expected every thing to be done at school, and who was now determined to remove her. On Ellen's leaving her first school, she gave me to one of her companions; and, child-like, imagined that with me she had got rid also of her plague; and, indeed, the joy of parting was equal on both sides.

The pupil into whose hands I now passed being intended by her parents to become a dress-maker, left school the following week, to commence her apprenticeship; and the person to whom she was now consigned was generally respected as a very worthy woman; for she was fair in her dealings, obliging to her customers, and friendly to her neighbours: she had still, however, a fault—that of working her apprentices to

death, which cruel custom is unfortunately so common, that little is thought about it. The regular hours of work were much too long; and then there were so many jobs came in to be done by a certain time, that the greater part of the night was frequently taken up. It was no wonder, therefore, that the health and spirits of the poor girl sunk under the drudgery of such employment; yet, in the advertisements for apprentices in this branch of business, it was inserted that "the health and morals of the young people" were "particularly attended to." In this new situation my mistress and myself were both disappointed: she, who had counted the days and hours till she should leave school, now found that she had exchanged comparative liberty for close confinement and great privations. My vexation arose from another cause: I had naturally supposed that, in a place where nothing could be done without the Needle, I should be considered of some importance. But it is surely the fate of those who have a high opinion of themselves to meet with continual mortifications! There were always such a number of Needles about, that individually we were thought of no value; and many were daily swept away among rubbish and clippings. But

the worst of all was, that my old and hated rival, the Pin, was held in equal estimation with myself: scarcely was there a bit of work that I went through, but there was a row of them stuck in my way for guides; as if I could not have done full as well without their assistance. But so much for prejudice in favour of these inferior articles. Notwithstanding, however, the slight I experienced, I could not help occasionally feeling some pride, as well as pleasure, in the work about which I was employed. One day it fell to my lot to be used in making a rich silk pelisse, which was particularly gratifying, being tired of a great profusion of muslin work. The silk was remarkably soft, and it was lined with Persian, softer still; so I was going on as quickly as my mistress could desire; when, on a sudden, I felt myself affected in a way that I had never been before: a bluntness seemed coming on, for which I could in no wise account, not having the least suspicion of the subtle enemy that was now destroying me, namely, the Persian, which, with all its apparent softness, had the power of turning the edge of the finest steel. I now found it was all over with me, for, although my point was not yet lost, I felt it giving way every moment. My mistress was

driving me along at an unmerciful rate, when she discovered that, in her haste, she had stitched one of the seams the wrong side out. In her consternation at the mistake, she dropped me out of her hand; and, as I sincerely hoped, did not afterwards take the trouble to look for me. I remained on the floor till the following morning, when I was swept into the street.

Not long after, I was picked up by a poor woman, who saw me shining through the dirt. As soon as she got home, her first care was to put me into a large needle-case; but never shall I forget the companions I met there: out of a dozen, besides myself, not more than three were perfect. There were two immense stocking-needles, more like bodkins than any thing else, and a very little one, which owed its state of high preservation to its being too small for the good woman's use: of the remainder, two were rusty, four bent most tortuously, the rest destitute of points, and one actually without an eye: for such was the thrift of the good housewife, that she never supposed we could be useless. I rather wondered at her having such a value for Needles, as it appeared she had little or no time for work: her family was large, and there was so much to do during the

whole day, that she never sat still for five minutes together. This, however, did not trouble me; for the desire of being useful had rather given way to the wish of being preserved; and, as I judged the work in this family would not be of a kind to suit me, I should have been content to remain idle. This, however, was not to be; for when the family were gone to bed, my notable mistress set to work; and I, being the best Needle she possessed, was selected. But how shall I describe my anger and vexation, on eyeing the sort of work provided for me! For near two hours I was employed upon an old coat of her husband's: then I had to sew in the crown of one of her boy's hats; and, last of all, she had the barbarity to employ me in fresh binding a pair of her own shoes! How much longer this unmerciful woman would have kept on I know not; but fortunately her candle went out, and I was left to rest for the night. For some weeks we went on in this way. It seemed to be the determination of this careful dame to make old clothes last for ever; and the more useful she found me, the less she spared me: indeed, if I had not been the "best tempered" steel in the world, I never could have got through what I did, without bending or

breaking. To add to my misery, there seemed no chance of bettering my condition, for my present mistress took such care in putting me by, that I had no hopes of escaping out of her hands. At length one day, as we were working, a neighbour came in with the news of a "great sight!" My mistress started up, and, forgetting her usual precaution, ran into the street with her work in her hand; and, as I was hanging to the end of the thread, I slipped off and fell to the ground.

It was again my fortune to be taken out of the dirt by a little girl, who, by her carrying a bag, I supposed was going to school. This proved to be the case; it was one of those establishments, founded by some charitable persons, for the benefit of poor children, whose parents cannot afford to pay for any sort of education. The school was partly supported by subscription, and partly by the work taken in. This appeared a good plan, and I was not sorry at being once more rescued. The work upon which I was put suited me very well, and I had no apprehension of being thrown aside for the whim of purse-making, or any other fashionable caprice. In short, I began to think myself settled, when one afternoon I had been

marking some shirts, and, on the school's breaking off, my mistress, in her hurry to quit, left me sticking in the work, which, being folded up as finished, was carried home. I was now deposited in a dressing-room, and thinking what would become of me, when a lady entered, and examined the shirts separately, on doing which I slipped out, and, by the law of gravitation, was once more propelled to the ground: she, however, condescended to pick me up, and I was transferred to a piece of work in which I had no hand. A Mrs. Thomson was then introduced: she was in mourning, and poorly dressed; but seemed, by her manner, to have been well brought up. "I wish (said the lady) to pay you for the work, and to show you some which I have had done at the School of Industry—what do you think of it?" "It is very neat (said Mrs. Thompson); but I hope you have no fault to find with mine." "I cannot say I have—it is not the *work*, but the *price*, with which I am not satisfied. I can get these shirts made at the School of Industry for two shillings a piece, and marked into the bargain—here are twelve more to make, and, if you choose to undertake them upon the same terms, I will give you the preference."

“I am very sorry, Madam (replied the poor woman), it is not in my power—I could not make one of them in a day, if I had nothing else to do, and you know I have a family to provide for. Indeed (added she) though I dare say the schools of industry are of great benefit to some, yet you can have no idea, madam, how much harm they do by underworking poor people; because, being supported, they can afford to do the work at a price by which no one else can live.” To this the lady made no other answer than that, as she could get her work done at that price, she should give no more. Mrs. Thomson hesitated for a short time; but necessity at last prevailed, and she accepted the terms. Being placed along with the work intended for Mrs. Thomson, I became her property.

In the family I was now in it would have been impossible for a stranger to have discovered the want and poverty that existed—every thing was so clean—the poor woman and her children so neat, that nothing about them bore the appearance of distress. Yet it really did exist, and to an extent far beyond the squalid wretchedness visible in the cottages of the professedly poor. Mrs. Thomson had been a widow little more than a

year, and during that time had, by the most persevering industry, and under the greatest privations, obtained a bare subsistence for herself and family ; but now that the price of work was so much reduced by the schools of industry, she, notwithstanding all her exertions, found it impossible to obtain a living. The result was, the seizure of her small property, and the consignment of herself and family to the parish workhouse.

My identity now became a matter of dispute between an old lady and her servant. Betty had picked me up at the sill of a baker's door, where she had been to express her mistress's anger at their spoiling the last baking ; and having brought me in triumph home, she, with all the familiarity of a favourite, presented me as the very Needle that her mistress had the night before dropped upon the carpet. The good old lady was greatly rejoiced at the restoration of her valued property, attaching, as she did, importance to every thing she had long possessed. Her faith, however, was a little staggered, when she heard where I had been picked up ; but Betty persisted that she should have known the Needle among a thousand ; and, besides, brought in so many instances of these

kind of miracles, that her mistress, whose temper was the more yielding of the two, at last gave up the point; and I was deposited, as a recovered treasure, in my present comfortable situation, from whence I have been able to recount my adventures, and to which I have only to add, that next morning I was compelled to listen to some impertinent remarks, which fell from the house-maid, who declared that her mistress and Betty must both be mad, for they had almost spoiled a good Brussels carpet, with dropping candle-grease over it, in looking for a good-for-nothing Needle. After breakfast Betty went out, as usual, to execute commissions, and to collect news. When she returned, her mistress saw, by her manner, that she had something to communicate. "Oh ! madam (cried Betty) you will be so surprised, and so sorry. You know the widow Thomson, whose children we used to notice for being so well-behaved. Well, madam, their goods are all taken, and themselves are going to the work-house. Every body is shocked; for, as she made no complaint, it was never imagined how much they had suffered. And do you know, madam, it is all owing to *working cheap*—they say the schools of industry ruin poor people by underworking

them. Now gentlefolks should consider that they get nothing by this attempt at saving ; for, if they have their work done for little, it is made up in poor's rate, as it brings so many to the parish. Now, why don't they employ the children some other way, or, if they must do this kind of work, let them do it at a price by which others may get a living ; and then it would not do so much harm. It would then be a charity, not a saving, to those who, after they have subscribed, contrive to be repaid by having their work done at half price." My good mistress was, indeed, shocked at this representation ; and the instance before her proved it but too true ; but her feelings did not evaporate in words ; for, after sending some present relief to the widow Thomson, she set off to visit her acquaintance, in the hopes of persuading them to forego this mischievous practice of false economy.

When she returned, "I don't know how it is (said she to Betty), but I cannot persuade any one to be of our opinion : they all persist in calling it a charity to employ those who work the cheapest. However, I have thought of a plan for the widow, and one that I dare say she will like. You recollect, Betty, good old Mrs. Truman, who has kept the day-school for so many years ; I have just

heard that she has come to a considerable property, and, as it is probable she will give up her school, it occurred to me that this might become an establishment for the widow." Betty received this intelligence with much surprise; but the only drawback was, that the intelligence and the plan had not originated with herself; for of news she was scarcely less a monopolist than of schemes and plans. She, however, had the satisfaction of taking an active part in bringing about so desirable an end; most of all, in being the bearer of good tidings, and in carrying the grateful acknowledgments of Mrs. Thomson to her mistress.

Having no more adventures to relate, I must come to a conclusion. My benevolent mistress had been what is called a great worker; but the view she now took of the subject brought her to conclude, that a Lady Sempstress might be sometimes out of her place, more especially at an advanced period of life. I may, therefore, now consider myself at rest; and, like the trophies of old, that were hung up in honour of their former exploits, I repose upon my laurels.



THE REMONSTRANCE OF A PIN.

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THE
REMONSTRANCE OF A PIN.

MRS. STITCHWELL was reading one day to her young people the Adventures of a Needle, and I happening to be in her pin-cushion, had also the opportunity of hearing them. My curiosity and interest were both excited by the history of one so near akin; and I rejoiced to hear that one of my kind had been the means of rescuing her from dust and oblivion, by extricating her from the crevice in the floor, where she lay hid. But how provoked was I at the ingratitude and insolence of this Needle, when, almost immediately after the service thus rendered her by a Pin, she begins to abuse the tribe, and to pity herself for being obliged to keep company with us! It will scarcely be credited, that even a heart of steel should not be moved at the usage which our unfortunate race often meet with: for surely no article in such constant request in every family, and in every place, is so despised and oppressed—what-

ever is despicable is said to be “not worth a Pin;” and hundreds of people, who want our assistance every day, and who, if they were to set all their wits to work, could not invent any thing half so useful, endeavour to make our worthlessness proverbial.

It is not, however, so much my intention to complain of the ill usage of the world, as to answer the accusations of my rival. First, she charges us with making people untidy, but forgets her own objections to be employed in mending stockings, preferring to add to the pride and finery of servant girls. She also accuses us of scratching poor little children. I will not deny but that we are unluckily made to do so now and then; but more through the awkwardness of those who use us, than from any spite of our own. Above all, the contempt with which she treats our assistance in fixing work for her, is intolerable; when every one must allow, that in the present fashion of flounces and furbelows, were it not for the help of Pins, as leaders and guides, the Needle would have a much harder task; and, with all her skill, she knows it is not in her power to fix the bow on a bonnet so smartly as we can. Then, observe the parade she makes

of wishing to be useful; but was miserable in the only place she really could be so, because the work did not suit her taste! She boasts, too, of her sweet temper, in not bending or breaking; owing, I rather think, to a tough constitution, or the hardening she received in her infancy.

But I forgot that abusing my enemy is not justifying myself. I shall not, however, trouble the reader with my own insignificant history; but merely bring forward a few of my services to womankind, to prove that the Pin, though inferior to the Needle in some instances, is much oftener useful in its way, and equally indispensable. For example, an old lady going out one day, finding the collar of a new pelisse much too wide, declared that if she had not fastened it with a Pin, she should have caught her death with cold; and in her the poor would have lost a friend. Again, one very bleak day in the month of March, a poor woman was going along with a large bundle in one hand, and with the other leading a child, crying bitterly from the cold, owing to the want of a Pin in its shawl, which kept flying up continually, and exposing the child's shoulders to the north wind. The mother endeavoured all in her power to pacify it, but to no purpose. "If I had but a Pin," said the

poor woman, feeling in her pocket for the pin-cushion, which unluckily she had left at home: when, at that identical moment she discovered me shining in the path; and, on picking me up, received a momentary gratification, beyond what a much greater good at another time could have procured. The same party, on reaching home, employed me with equal success in securely fastening a curtain before a broken pane of glass. These are a few particular instances, out of hundreds in my own history, whilst their parallels may be found in the experience of every individual of the myriads which compose our vast fraternity. How often, at a pinch, do our services appear, in fixing the string of a bonnet exposed to a sudden gale; whereas the Needle would require thread, scissors, and thimble, to do that which one of us effects in a moment. With respect to myself, I might cite many instances in which I have served instead of a bodkin, a nail, &c. &c. but I am only writing a Remonstrance, and not a history, which if my vanity prompted me to do, I hope, though I might indulge in a *little* egotism, I should avoid the illiberal error of praising myself at the expense of my neighbours.

THE VISION OF TIME.



THE VISION OF TIME,

OR

AN AFTERNOON'S NAP.

I WAS sitting alone after dinner, thinking over the events of my past life, and reflecting with much satisfaction, that my time had, upon the whole, been very well spent. It was true, in the early part of my career, I had squandered away a fortune at the gaming-table; but I had since, by industry and management, more than replaced my former funds; in the accomplishment of which object I had received more pleasure than if I had never been obliged to struggle; for, after all, nothing can be enjoyed, the want of which has not been felt. I may now sit down at my ease, feeling that I have done my duty, and made good use of my time.

In the midst of these pleasing reflections I fell asleep.

On closing my eyes, the following vision was presented to my imagination:—Seated on one of

those benches frequently placed in public walks, a long avenue of trees appeared on the right and left. I was contemplating their stately growth, and the variety of picturesque spots seen between their openings, when a figure attracted my notice, advancing from the remotest distance to the place where I sat. His march was slow and steady: as he approached, many of the trees withered, or lost their verdure; some fell to the ground, and few escaped without marks of decay. The figure was near enough for me to observe, that his body was, for the most part, bare: and where the folds of his scanty drapery did not conceal it, it was covered with scars, occasioned by wounds, any one of which, to a mere mortal, must have been certain death.

On myself his proximity had a very sensible effect: every faculty seemed more or less paralysed—my vision was less clear—my hearing less perfect, and I even imagined myself lame.

I was not left long to ponder: he was before me, and I knew him to be Time. His look was awful and severe; but, passing on quickly, I soon recovered from the effects his presence had occasioned, and found at my feet a large scroll; when, looking towards the object which had so fixed my

attention, it had passed away. On taking up the scroll, I found it filled, if not with "mourning, lamentations, and woe," yet with an appalling account of my actions; my eye eagerly glanced over the words "killing, wounding, and wasting."

Upon a more deliberate examination, I found a sprinkling of commendation, and discovered that it was Time I had thus treated.

The memorandum ran as follows:—

A journey of pleasure—time well spent.

Another of the same character—time destroyed.

Taking a walk on such a day—good.

A similar day—wasted.

Occasional card-parties—time thrown away;

But an evening with my neighbour at back-gammon—time well spent.

Having always been regular in my attendance at church, I thought I might reasonably reckon upon that as time well spent. But, to my great surprise, many of my devotional hours were marked with the censure of Time.

I was now completely puzzled. The view I had taken of my past actions was so widely different from the one which now presented itself, that I knew not what to think. Some points, indeed, were clear enough, in which I was not deceived

in supposing I had done right. I had even to congratulate myself (upon looking over the scroll) on some good actions which had escaped my memory: but, alas! these were nothing in comparison with the account on the other side; for, in general, I had a much better recollection of the time I had employed well, than of that which I had wasted. Besides the account of time killed, wasted, mispent, &c. there appeared at the end of every day's reckoning a portion of time lost, amounting, in the whole, to some years of my life.

I was at a loss to understand the meaning of much that I saw, when, turning to the other side of the scroll, I found an explanation; and, in this way, I was further addressed :

“ After having wasted your patrimony at the gaming-table, amongst swindlers and sharpers, and thereby enabled them to carry on to a greater extent their plans of mischief and depredation, you now flatter yourself, by supposing that you deserve as much credit for your industry, as if you had never had the means of independence in your power. But remember that the time which you have devoted to the recovery of your lost fortune, might have been employed in benefitting

your fellow-creatures. Getting money has been, in your estimation, the fulfilment of every duty, and, having accomplished this, you imagine that no better use can be made of time, and think yourself now entitled to waste it in whatever way you please.

“ Again, after the fatigue of business, you take a journey into the country, and, by change and variety, fit yourself for greater exertions, and the better exercise of your talents. But a journey of two hundred miles to be present at a horse-race is, in your account, put upon the same footing as one of needful relaxation, forgetting that you make one in the number of those who support and encourage, by their presence, all the vices attendant on such diversions.

“ The exercise of hunting, sanctioned as it is by all ranks of people, comes under censure, though not in the same degree as that of horse-racing. Animals of a noxious kind must be destroyed, as well as those which serve as food for the use of man; but to make their destruction your sport, or the stimulus to a ride on horse-back, will hardly bear the character of time well spent. Your card-parties were for the express purpose of destroying time; but your game at

backgammon was sanctioned by its motive, that of affording amusement to an invalid neighbour; and, for the same reason, a game of cards may be authorized, or when taken up in preference to idle or stupid conversation:

“ Taking a walk, with your eyes open to the beauties of nature, and your heart to the bounties of Providence, is among the best and most perfect enjoyments of life; but, when taken to gain an appetite for a turtle-feast, it is time wasted in its worst sense.

“ But, of all the self-delusions by which erring mortals are led astray, is that of supposing they are in the act of devotion, when their thoughts are engaged on their temporal concerns.

“ In how many instances has a pending law-suit, the preservation of your game, or other matters of a like kind, occupied your attention in the house of God ?”

Here I began to be violently alarmed for what was to follow, and, turning my eyes suddenly to the spot where I had last seen the figure of Time, in the act of rising to overtake him, my slumbers were broken—but the reflections remained.

TOYS NOT TRIELES.



TOYS NOT TRIFLES.

“ OH mother ! (cried Jane, coming hastily into the room), my aunt has made me such a present ! guess what it is !” “ A new bonnet,” said mamma. “ A thousand times better (cried Jane) ; but I am sure you will never guess ; so I had better show you at once.”. Saying which, she displayed a rich gold watch, with chain and seals of equal value. “ I chose it myself (continued Jane) ; it cost a great deal of money, but I am sure I do not know how much. My aunt told me several times to take which I liked best ; but I am afraid you don’t think it is pretty (said the little girl, observing that her mother looked serious). “ Indeed, my dear, I do think it very pretty, and give you much credit for your taste : the only objection I have to it is, that it is much too fine for one in your station. Don’t you remember, that as our washerwoman’s little girl was passing along, you observed how foolish it was for her to wear a

sash. Now there is nothing more absurd in a washerwoman's daughter wearing a sash, than in some tradesmen's daughters wearing so costly an ornament as you are in possession of. Remember, I do not object to the trinket, but to the expensiveness of its decorations."

Jane appeared much disturbed by her mother's observations ; " But (said she), when I am nicely dressed, I might wear it; and then people would not know that I am only a tradesman's daughter." " Fine dress and rich ornaments are too common for any one now to be distinguished by them (said her mother); still I hope, if it were not so, you would have more sense than to wish to pass for what you are not. Few but those who practise the deception can imagine the mortification that belongs to it; and nothing is really so creditable as to have only what is suitable to one's station. In giving you this article of finery, your aunt has considered what would please rather than what is proper; so return it with thanks, and tell her the reason why you would prefer a plainer one."

" Or suppose, mother (said Jane, who did not like to part with her fine watch), that I keep it by me, and do not wear it; only just let me show it to my schoolfellows, and then I will put it away."

“ I think that would be very foolish—a watch is too useful an article to lay by: besides, that would not satisfy you; people seldom care for fine things which they cannot display: and as to showing it to your schoolfellows, depend upon it they will not like you the better for possessing what it is not in their power to obtain.

“ It reminds me of a circumstance which happened some years since:—A little girl of the name of Ann Jefferson, whose parents were very poor people, used to go to one of the charity-schools in this neighbourhood. Ann was a good-natured well-disposed girl—a favourite both with the teachers and her schoolfellows. When she was little more than ten years old, some person (very injudiciously) gave her a hat and feathers, which, though half worn out, and very shabby, was a piece of finery such as she had never before possessed. All the week she was thinking how fine she should be on Sunday: she got into disgrace for not knowing her lesson—the truth was, Ann had been thinking what she should wear, instead of learning her task. Sunday at last came: unluckily, she could not exhibit her finery at church, being obliged to attend in the school dress, with the rest of the children; but as soon as church

was over Ann went and changed her clothes. Instead of the neat purple stuff gown, and neat white tippet, a dingy light-coloured frock, a muslin handkerchief full of holes and darns, and, last of all, the hat and feathers, were put on. Being thus equipped, she took a walk in the public road, where she knew she should meet the greatest number of people; fancying, as she went along, that every one admired her fine hat, when, in reality, not one in fifty knew if she had any thing on her head at all; and those who did notice her thought she had made a scarecrow of herself, and, in their own minds, blamed her mother for letting her wear such trumpery.

“ An infirm old woman, who was passing, happened to let her stick fall, which Ann picked up for her. ‘ Thank you, kindly, Miss,’ said the poor woman. Ann now thought she had arrived at honours—to wear a hat and feathers, and be called Miss! All the way home she kept repeating the word—‘ she could not have said more (thought Ann) had it been to the squire’s daughter.’

“ She presently after met some of her school-fellows. They admired her finery almost as much as she did herself; but it also raised their envy, and, as Ann gave herself a few airs of supe-

riority, they soon took occasion to quarrel with her.

“Ann now returned home highly incensed with her companions, and in a very ill humour.

“The vexation did not end here; for the next day, when the children went to school, and were questioned upon what they remembered of the sermon, Ann, who had generally been able to give a good account, could not now remember a word, and was obliged to surrender her place to one of the girls with whom she had quarrelled. This was a fresh mortification—she had never before had a word with her schoolfellows; but now they all seemed pleased with her disgrace. All this, however, she put up with, comforting herself with the thoughts of wearing her fine hat again on the following Sunday, when she again took her solitary walk. Her companions avoided her, and she them. How different was it formerly, when, undistinguished from the rest, they took their walks together whenever a holiday occurred; still, however, she would retain her finery, though at the expense of her comfort. On this day she was seen by one of the teachers, who, without appearing to notice her, went and remonstrated with the mother; for it was one of

the rules of the charity, that none of the children should wear any other dress than that which it provided.

"The mother, who was an ignorant woman, and who felt pride in seeing her daughter dressed out, took the matter up warmly, saying, that her child had come honestly by the clothes, and it was very hard that she might not wear them. The teacher had only to remark, that her coming honestly by them had nothing to do with the matter—that it was against the regulations of the school, and, if she persisted in disobedience, her daughter would be dismissed. She expressed her hope, however, that the mother would not be so blind to her child's interest as to suffer her to lose the advantages of her education. So saying, she left Mrs. Jefferson to consider the matter.

"Ann continued at school the week following; but, as it was then observed that no alteration appeared in her dress, she was dismissed accordingly. The mother was loud in her complaints, telling every body what a hard case it was, that her child should be turned out of the school for wearing a bonnet which had been given her.

"This ill-judged gift was the cause which made Ann good for nothing; for, from the time she left

school, she was employed, through the bad management of her mother, in running of errands all day long; and what leisure she had was taken up in making what she thought finery; for the Sunday, while, during the week, she went about ragged and dirty. This was a bad preparation for a girl who had her bread to get by service.

" The time, however, came when Ann was too old to remain at home, and her mother too poor to keep her doing nothing. She passed the first five or six months in making attempts, in several places, to fulfil the duties of a servant; but the habit of idleness did not suddenly wear off. Her complaints of her master or mistress wife, at first, listened to by her mother, who took her part, until she heard that her own conduct, in bringing up her daughter, was censured by all; which, being true, highly provoked her. She now turned her back upon the poor girl, who, finding she had no longer a home to come to, determined to make herself useful; and, having obtained a good situation as nursery-maid, went on tolerably well, and might have continued to do so, had not her love of dress again thrown her upon the world.

" The case was this:—Ann was accustomed to

wash and dry her extra finery after the family had retired to bed, which practice being discovered by her mistress, she was severely reprimanded, and, for a time, she discontinued her plan ; but she soon thought it hard not to wear as many caps and frills as usual, and relapsed into her former practice ; and hung the clothes-horse again, full of these articles, by the fire, to dry, for some time, without any ill effect ; but one night the watchman gave the alarm of fire ! fortunately before it had reached to any height. The house was saved, but not without great damage ; and the cause was too obvious not to be ascertained. Ann's dismissal followed of course.

“ This unfortunate young woman is now among the wandering and abandoned of her sex, who, like herself, have probably left the paths of usefulness and virtue, tempted, by some injudicious notice of personal charms, to vie in appearance with those whose station in society afforded the opportunity of giving scope to their desires, in decorating their persons, though too often at the expense of their mind ; and who, to use the expression of Mrs. West (one of our most useful and elegant writers), are but as ‘ pegs on which to hang finery.’ ”

THE BEETLE AND THE SPIDER.



THE BEETLE AND THE SPIDER,

A FABLE.

“ How hard it is (said a young Beetle to his mother), that we should be obliged to lead such a dismal life, always creeping about in holes and corners, whilst other creatures are enjoying their liberty in open sunshine. Why need we hide ourselves? Have we not a right, as well as others, to a place in the world?”

“ Certainly, my child (replied his mother), and we have a place in it; but it is neither pleasant nor safe for us to be much abroad in the open day.”

“ Why is it not safe?” said the young one.

“ Because, although very harmless in our nature, we are unfortunately, to the ignorant part of mankind, disagreeable in our appearance; and, notwithstanding there is room enough for all, yet many are so cruel as to deprive us of life, because they do not like to look at us.”

“ How is that possible (said the young insect)?

Surely they cannot think us ugly; our form is neatness itself, and what can be more beautiful than our bright shining coat of purple and black?"

"It is all very true (observed the mother), but those who have not eyes to see our beauty, think us ill-looking: however, it is of little consequence, for our inclinations are so well suited for our security, that we never care to fly about till late in the evening, or in the twilight, of a fine summer's night, when we can enjoy ourselves without fear of molestation. Nor can I imagine how you came to differ so much from the rest of your species, as to wish to be gadding abroad at any other time."

"I should not have thought about it (replied the little Beetle) if I had not seen that monster, the Spider, so frightful, and so wicked in his nature, in a situation the most conspicuous, making the fairest flowers in the garden support his mischief, and daily destroying numbers of innocent insects. Is it not provoking to see this sanguinary wretch carrying on his trade in the face of day, and in the sight of every one, whilst I forsooth dare not show myself?"

"Before you complain, recollect, my child,

that the station he occupies is as free for you as for him, if you choose to expose yourself to the same danger; for depend upon it he will not remain there long in safety."

Here the conversation ended—the old Beetle travelled on to her retreat, and the young one stayed to watch the motions of the Spider.

When he returned home he gave his mother an account of the number of flies that had been caught and destroyed.

"It is a sad thing (said she), to see the evils which we cannot prevent; but it is of no use to spend all our time in watching and grieving over them."

The next day the young Beetle was again at his post, and upon his return observed to his mother, that he was more convinced than ever, how foolish it was to dream away their lives in a dark hole. "The Spider is still undisturbed, and likely to remain so: he has spread another web, twice as large as the one he made yesterday, and swung it right across the gravel walk; and there he sits in the middle of it, and I dare say thinks himself the king of the garden. Why should not I endeavour to take a station equally high? I can climb the

rose-tree close by, and that, you know, will be above him."

"Wait till the morrow (said the mother); we shall see if his pride will not have a fall."

"Ah, mother (said the young one), you have prophesied that so often; but, as you say, we shall see."

The next day, while on their way, the young one described the beauty of the place, and the pleasantness of the situation.

"And surely (observed the little insect), while such a tyrant remains in security, there can be no danger for such harmless creatures as we are."

By this time they had arrived within sight of the Spider's domain, but saw no signs of him, or his web, when, approaching the tree, on which he had lately suspended his snares, and preparing to climb, the young Beetle was struck with terror, on seeing the mangled remains of the voracious insect crushed in the path.

This was sufficient—the old Beetle forbore to make any farther reflections, than just to observe, that the Spider might have continued in the way and station for which he was designed till a much longer period, but that he had obtruded

himself upon the notice of those to whom the path properly belonged.

Thus saying, she ceased, for she knew that, when conviction took place, it was needless to read long lectures. So they returned to their habitation, and from this time the young one was satisfied with that obscurity by which safety was best insured.



ALL FOR THE BEST.

ALL FOR THE BEST.

IN the village of Hurford there resided a family of the name of Eastwood. Although poor people (for the husband was only a farmer's labourer), yet, through good management and industry, they contrived to live in greater credit and comfort than many who earned more money.

Not a stranger passed their dwelling without stopping to notice the neat white cottage, and to admire the beautiful little garden before it, which it was the pride and delight of James Eastwood to keep in nice order. Yet, although this family lived in a better way than the generality of poor people, they were by no means objects of envy among their neighbours; for the Eastwoods were so thoroughly good-natured and kind-hearted—so ready to assist, to the best of their power, all who wanted their aid, that they had the universal good-will of the village.

Their family consisted of four children, three boys and a girl. Robert, the eldest, was a fine-

grown lad of twelve years of age, who assisted his father in the field. James and Harry were also two promising children; and little Mary, being the youngest child, and the only girl, was the spoiled pet of the house.

It happened, unfortunately, that Mary was of a disposition which would not bear too much indulgence; and the bringing up of their daughter was the only instance of bad management which appeared in this otherwise well-regulated family.

The nature of the child seemed well disposed, but her temper, untractable from indulgence, became every day more violent. What, however, was obvious to every one else, was not at all times seen by the parents, who never considered that, by their false tenderness, they were rendering their darling an object of aversion to all but themselves.

In the meantime the Eastwoods were pitied by some of their neighbours, for having so refractory a child. Others blamed them for their blind indulgence; but every body disliked Mary, and prophesied the misery she would bring on her parents as she grew up. But how widely different do things frequently turn out from what is expected! Mary was scarcely seven years old when

her mother died; and what an alteration did this event produce in the sentiments of those who knew the family! All who inveighed against the spoiled urchin now pitied the poor little motherless girl; and their compassion was still further awakened when, in something less than a twelve-month, the father married again. Poor Mary, it was feared, would feel the hardships of her new situation in proportion to the indulgence she had hitherto experienced: for the second wife was a sharp notable dame, who, it was pretty evident, would soon break the stubborn spirit of her daughter-in-law.

As is generally the case in country places, the affair was discussed by the neighbours, some of whom were angry with James Eastwood for marrying again, while others took his part, alleging that a poor man could not do without some one to look after his house.

Mary, who, after her mother's death, was frequently with one or other of the neighbours, often heard this kind of conversation. Though she was too young to comprehend all that was said upon the subject, yet she gathered enough to give her an idea, that her step-mother was a person to whom she owed neither love nor obedience.

Among the gossips there was one, however, who did not inveigh against step-mothers, or denounce husbands who married again. This was an old woman who had lived in the village many years—she was poor, but had seen better days. The superiority of Widow Darnwell's manners, and the patience with which she accommodated herself to her condition, rendered her respected, as her uniform kindness made her equally beloved.

But upon the present occasion many felt inclined to quarrel with the widow, who, although she had long been intimate with the Eastwoods' family, and had always been fond of little Mary, seemed less concerned at her situation than any one else. She even persisted in saying it was all for the best. These were strange notions, and the dame was considered a strange old woman; but Mary soon discovered that she was her best friend. Very little time had elapsed before great alterations took place in the household of the Eastwoods, and the second wife began to set things to rights, as she called it. But this is a doubtful term—Martha's setting to rights was keeping the place in a continual bustle, and James, who had been used to a comfortable fire-side when his day's

work was over, was a good deal annoyed at the constant brushing and cleaning which was always going forward.

But this was not all—it has before been observed, how much delight Eastwood had taken in cultivating his little flower-garden. In the summer's evening, to have the table placed opposite the open door, to drink his jug of ale, and admire his fine plants, was, to him, a real luxury; and what pleasure could be cheaper? But Martha, his present wife, was an enemy to any thing in the shape of pleasure, and the flower-garden was, to her, a source of vexation.

She fretted and fidgetted that such a piece of ground should be put to no better purpose, when it might be planted with cabbages or potatoes. In vain her husband argued that his master always supplied them with vegetables, Martha kept to her point. 'It was a sin and a shame for poor people to be so extravagant as to have any thing about them; but what was of use. In short, she made herself so miserable about it, that James gave up his garden bit by bit, till at length it was, to his wife's satisfaction, planted with onions and cabbages. Then Martha would keep a pig, and the beautiful honey-suckle which grew against the

side of the cottage, and had long been the admiration of passers-by, was pulled down, in order to erect a pig-stye.

At the year's end, when all expenses were calculated, it appeared that the pork and bacon had cost as much as if they had been purchased of the village butcher.

But these were facts that Martha could not comprehend; and she still continued her course, though nothing but additional dirt and trouble were gained by it.

There was, however, one amendment in the family, since Martha was placed at its head. Mary became a more tractable girl: before her mother's death, the violent temper of this child had occasioned her parents, at times, some uneasiness. As the youngest she had been considered and treated like an infant so long, and correction had been so often deferred, that at last they ran into a notion that it was too late to attempt it, and contented themselves with hoping that time would cure the evil. But this was not very likely, without some pains on their part; and the screams of Mary, whenever she was in a passion, used to alarm her mother so much, that, whatever was the

point of contention, it regularly ended in the child's having her own way.

When Dame Eastwood died, the father took it into serious consideration, that he ought to bring his daughter's temper under control; but this, together with his ordinary occupations, he found too difficult: added to which, he could not find it in his heart to speak harshly to a child which had been the fondled darling of a mother who was now no more.

The task, therefore, of subduing the rebellious spirit of Mary fell to her step-mother, and, in a shorter time than could have been imagined, a considerable change was effected; and James Eastwood, though he did not approve of his wife's management in some respects, could not but give her credit for the improvement which appeared in his daughter's temper.

The present Mrs. Eastwood had, however, many difficulties to contend with, not only from the disposition of the child, but also from the interference of others; for many who had blamed the mother of Mary, for her unlimited indulgence, now blamed the present system of, what they called, Martha's severity. Here it must be observed, that Dame Eastwood, though not a good-

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ALL FOR THE BEST.

ther was so pleased. Robert is grown quite tall; he says he likes his place, for his master is very kind to him."

The thoughts of her brother put every thing else out of Mary's head, so that it was with some difficulty that her friend brought her back to the thread of her story. At length she proceeded:—

"And so, as I was looking at the pictures, mother called out—' Mary (says she), does the kettle boil?' Well, then, down I popped the book, and ran off to the pump. Mrs. Jenkins was there—she filled my kettle for me; and, says she, 'what a shame it is for your mother to send such a little thing as you to fill that great kettle. I wonder what next she will set you about.' So she kept me talking, and I was telling her about poor Robert coming to see us, and about—but I'm sure it did not seem a minute that I staid. When I got back, mother was standing at the door. Oh gracious! how frightened I was. She snatched the kettle from me. ' You good-for-nothing hussey,' (says she) ' you know I expect your father home every minute, and he never has a moment to spare in the morning, so he will lose his breakfast, and all through you; but I'll teach you to mind what I say another time.' So

she flew at me, and beat me, and knocked my head against the door ; that is, in trying to get away, I stumbled, and fell against it."

" But that makes all the difference, Mary, (said the widow) ; " and now, my dear, don't you think your mother had great reason to be angry with you."

Mary was silent for a minute, and at last owned she had done wrong.

The good old woman praised her ingenuousness, and gave her credit for telling the truth. She then advised her in future always to do as she was bid upon the instant. Along with good advice her kind friend gave Mary a piece of cake : and matters being thus smoothed down, the little girl returned home in a very quiet and obedient frame of mind ; which her mother perceiving, and considering that she had been sufficiently punished, said no more upon the subject of the morning's disaster ; and for a time all went on pretty well.

But, notwithstanding the kindness and good counsel of her friend, the Widow Darnwell, poor Mary suffered long from the effect of early unrestrained indulgence, which had rendered a temper naturally self-willed still more so, and

which made many things appear to her great hardships, which another in her situation would have disregarded.

Four years had now past. Mary's brothers were all out, each getting his own living; and there being now a second family, Mary was no longer the youngest, but the eldest of all those at home.

One who had so long been herself a pet, could not, without jealousy, see all the care and bestowed upon the young ones, to whom she was obliged to give up on every occasion. It is true, in this instance, she was suffering no more than what she had inflicted on her brothers, whose play-things she would snatch from them, whenever the boys were so unlucky as to bring them within her view. But what she now suffered being retributive justice, did not make her feel it the less severely; and scarcely a day passed on which she was not subjected to some trial of patience.

Upon most of these occasions, however, Mary found, that so little was gained, either by resistance or by giving way to passion, that she gradually learned to submit, with a tolerable good grace, to the sacrifices she was forced to make; and what was perhaps more fortunate for her than

any thing else, she had now no time to think of her grievances; for, what with nursing the little ones, helping about the house, and needle-work, Mary had not a minute unoccupied. But a circumstance one day occurred, that put her patience 'more to the proof than she was able to endure.

It happened that, a short time before her mother's death, Mary had been presented with a doll, which her mother had taken great pains to dress. Mary, notwithstanding her headstrong temper, felt so much gratitude for the trouble which her parent had taken to please her, that she was more careful of this plaything than she had ever been of any thing before. From the time of Mrs. Eastwood's death, this treasured article had been carefully laid by, till the period we now speak of; when the present dame Eastwood, being busier than usual, and her children more troublesome than usual, she was studying in what manner to quiet them all, so as to be able to go on with her occupations. Having hushed the infant to sleep, and laid it in the cradle, and given little Tommy some oyster-shells to play with, she had only to attend to Jane, the eldest, who was a restless noisy child, and possessed too much of the stirring disposition of her mother, to render it safe to leave

her unprovided with amusement. Mrs. Eastwood, at last, recollects Mary's fine doll, which she accordingly gave her, with a charge to play quietly with it, and then returned to her occupations.

But the calm was not of long duration; Dame Eastwood was soon recalled to the kitchen by the loud and repeated cries of little Jane. Thinking some accident had happened, the mother hastened down stairs, when terror gave way to anger, at the cause of the disturbance; for there stood Mary, holding her doll at arm's length, out of reach of the child, who continued screaming and struggling to obtain possession of it. Dame Eastwood soon put an end to the contest by snatching the doll out of Mary's hands, and returning it into those of her own child. After making the former feel the effect of her anger, she endeavoured once more to establish something like order. This, however, was not so easily managed: all went wrong for the rest of the day, and many an angry glance, and many a bitter word, were thrown at Mary, as the cause of all the annoyance.

Trifling as may appear the grievances of childhood, they may very fairly be measured by those of maturity. The dispossession of property, in the shape of a toy, is as severely felt in early days,

as that of an estate at an advanced period of life; to say nothing of the petty miseries which grown children are apt to swell into matters of great moment, which, in the eye of an indifferent observer, would weigh no more than the loss of a top or a ball. We may, therefore, be pardoned in being thus circumstantial.

The day ended as it began. When the husband came home, he found all in confusion—the tea was not ready; Mary was seated moping in a corner, and his wife evidently out of humour. James inquired the cause: Mrs. Eastwood related the circumstances, with all the vexations attending it; but not all the fear which Mary had of her mother-in-law could prevent her, on this occasion, from telling her own story.

James now saw the matter in a different light from that in which his wife had represented it, and took the part of his daughter. This was too much for the patience of the dame, and an angry dispute was the consequence, during which, one of the younger children, impatient for its meal, and finding no attention paid to its repeated calls, in an attempt to help itself, unfortunately overset the table and its contents. The measure of mischance was now complete; and the scene which

followed may be better imagined than described.

From all that had passed, and the confusion which her father's interference had occasioned, Mary found that, in this instance, submission would have been better than resistance ; and she resolved to be more careful for the future. Reason began now to awaken reflection ; and a circumstance which soon followed gave her an opportunity of putting in practice the forbearance she had determined on.

As in the instance of her toy, a similar breach of justice took place. Mary had fostered a geranium with great care, which was allowed to stand in the window. Having one day been sent on an errand, on her return she was met by her little sister, who came running towards her, holding up a bright shilling in her hand.

“ Look here ! (said Jane) see what I've got. Mother says it's to go towards a new bonnet for me,” added the child exultingly.

“ Indeed (said Mary), and where did you get it ?”

“ Why, just after you went out, a fine lady came by, and asked mother if she would sell that little geranium which you planted ; and she was such a nice lady, and spoke so good-naturedly,

and said she was coming to live here, and a great deal ; and so mother told her she was very welcome to the geranium ; and the lady took it away with her, and when she was going she gave me this shilling, and I never had a shilling before in all my life."

Poor Mary was absolutely stunned, for the moment—the case appeared to her most aggravating: not only had her property been disposed of without her leave or knowledge, but its value bestowed upon another. Her first impulse was to wrest the money from her sister, assert her own claims to it, and remonstrate against the injustice of the act. She paused for an instant, and, on recollection of what she had suffered from her resistance on a recent occasion, resolved to let the matter pass over.

Mary had nearly reached home, and her step-mother was standing at the door, observing, from the manner of little Jane, that she had acquainted her sister with what had happened, and was anticipating the consequences. To her surprise, however, Mary came along very peaceably ; her face, indeed, was flushed, but she said nothing, the little one still holding up the shilling in triumph. The forbearance of her daughter was not

lost upon Mrs. Eastwood—she hastily took the money out of the child's hand, at the same time saying, in an under tone, “by good rights this money should be Mary's; but we are too poor for that, and she can get another geranium.”

This appeared like an acknowledgment of right, and it was sufficient to satisfy Mary; and she had reason to congratulate herself on having submitted in this trial of patience. Her mother-in-law, who had expected very different behaviour, treated Mary with more than usual kindness.

The lady who had taken a fancy to Mary's geranium was a person of fortune, who had lately come to reside in the neighbourhood; her husband, Colonel Humphrey, was abroad, and Mrs. Humphrey had chosen the village of _____ as a temporary residence, on account of her daughter's health. She was a person who had a great deal of time upon her hands, and, having little disposition to employ it usefully, occupied herself with sauntering about. In one of her walks she again paid a visit to the cottage of James Eastwood, made inquiries about the family, admired the healthy looks of the children, and, observing that Dame Eastwood kept poultry, asked if she

could not be supplied with new-laid eggs, which was gladly assented to.

Martha Eastwood was charmed with the condescension of the lady, and with the prospect of a customer for her eggs and poultry. Mary, on this occasion, was sent with the order on the following day, and was introduced into the room in which Mrs. Humphreys and her daughter were sitting.

“ You are not one of Mrs. Eastwood’s girls,” said the lady.

“ Yes, madam,” replied Mary.

“ That is strange ; I thought the one I saw the other day was her eldest child.”

“ So she is, ma’am—my own mother is dead.”

It amused Mrs. Humphrey to ask questions, more as a matter of curiosity, than from any interest she took.

“ Do you remember your own mother ?” asked she.

“ Oh yes, very well, indeed,” answered Mary, with a deep sigh.

“ You were very fond of her, I suppose,” continued Mrs. Humphrey.

“ She was very fond of me, and I was”—

“ Was what, child,” inquired the lady.

"I was often very naughty," and the tears came into Mary's eyes.

Miss Humphrey now whispered her mother, who did not ask any more questions, but paid for the eggs.

Mary described all the grandeur she had seen at the great house ; Mrs. Humphrey paid liberally, and Dame Eastwood never ceased congratulating herself on finding so good a customer.

Every time that Mary went on these errands she was detained more and more. The young lady, as well as her mother, seemed to take pleasure in talking to her ; and Mrs. Humphrey frequently remarked, that she never saw one of Mary Eastwood's condition that behaved with so much propriety ; for there was nothing vulgar either in her manners or in her appearance. In short, the more the ladies saw her the better they liked her.

It happened, at this time, that Mrs. Humphrey was obliged to leave her home for a few days. She knew that her daughter, who had no friends in the neighbourhood, would be very dull in her absence : for the governess of Miss Humphrey, though a good woman, was of a stern temper, and never unbent so far as to become the companion of her pupil. The thought, therefore, occurred to

Mrs. Humphrey, that it would not be amiss, while she was away, to let Mary Eastwood come and spend a part of every day at her house, to keep her child company.

The plan succeeded extremely well. The mother, on her return, found Louisa in better spirits than ordinary, and full of the praises of her new acquaintance: Mary Eastwood was such a good-tempered lively girl—they had been so happy together. Even Miss Franklin, the governess, acknowledged that she never saw a better-behaved child than Mary. In short, her society appeared to have had such a beneficial effect on the spirits of Miss Humphrey, that it suggested the idea to the mother, whether it would not be advisable to retain Mary as a companion for her daughter.

It may appear rather inconsistent, that Mrs. Humphrey should choose one in Mary's situation for this purpose; but there were circumstances which rendered the scheme eligible. Louisa was an only child; ill health had made her temper somewhat irritable and petulant, and the mother thought that such a companion as Mary would be more desirable than one who, being more on an equality with her daughter, might not be inclined to bear with the fretfulness of her temper.

The proposal was accordingly made, and joyfully accepted by the Eastwoods. The father, especially, was delighted with the idea of the advantages his child would reap from being placed in so desirable a situation.

Mary herself did not enter into the plan with so much satisfaction as might have been expected. It is true, the ladies were always kind to her, and she liked Miss Humphrey very much ; and the life she had hitherto led was often tiresome enough; but its hardships vanished when she was about to leave her home for the first time, and she looked forward with a degree of terror to living entirely at the great house.

It was, however, a settled thing, and Mary was to go on the following week. On acquainting her friend, the widow Darnwell, with the plan, she appeared a good deal disturbed at the intelligence, and disposed to find fault with the scheme altogether; and, on this occasion, much doubted if it would be for the best; she, however, gave her young friend some good advice respecting her future conduct. Mary took leave, and promised to see her whenever she should have the opportunity.

The day at length arrived for Mary's taking up

her residence in the family of Mrs. Humphrey. She was received with kindness, and made acquainted with the duties she was to perform. It was arranged, that in the mornings, while Miss Humphrey was engaged in her studies, Mary was to be kept at needle-work, or employed about the house: the after part of the day, when company was not expected, she was to spend with the young lady, whom she was instructed never to thwart or contradict.

The undertaking was not so difficult as might be imagined. Mary's violence of temper was much subdued: she had so long been in the habit of yielding her own inclinations to the will of others, that the task of pleasing Louisa, and keeping her in good humour, was comparatively easy; for the young lady, though, from ill health, occasionally petulant, possessed a good and generous disposition. The circumstance of Mary's being poor, and one who might be considered as bound patiently to endure caprice and ill temper, made this amiable girl particularly guarded in her behaviour to her.

Upon the whole, Mary found it an easy pleasant life; she fared better, and was clothed better; but still she thought of home, and how all was going

on those; and when little more than a week was elapsed, she begged so anxiously to behold her family, that she ventured to ask leave to visit her parents. This was readily granted. The morrow was Sunday, and Mary was allowed to spend the day at her own home.

This appeared one of the happiest days of her life—sunshine without, and within, all were so pleased to see her. Dame Eastwood, you in excellent humour—delighted to listen to the account of what was going on at the great house, and anticipating future advantages from the kindness and liberality of Mrs. Humphrey; and Mary returned in the evening, charged with injunctions to be careful not to forfeit the favour of her patroness. Of this, however, there appeared little probability; on the contrary, Mary every day seemed to rise higher in that lady's consideration. But the favour which was bestowed on her protégée did not proceed from any individual regard; for, although she permitted Mary to share the advantages of Louisa's lessons, the motive was her daughter's improvement; for, as Miss Humphrey had not a quick capacity, the mother thought a companion in her studies would give a stimulus to her exertion.

'This plan, however, did not answer the intention. Mary had good abilities, and was delighted with the opportunity thus afforded her ; and applied herself so diligently, that she soon surpassed her young friend in acquirements ; but Louisa had no jealousy or envy in her disposition, and, while she lamented her own incapacity, cherished no ill will to Mary for her superior talents.

Mrs. Humphrey viewed the matter in a different light, and, regretting she had made the experiment, began to question the propriety of bestowing accomplishments on a poor man's child ; still it would now be difficult to make any alterations in her plan, without appearing capricious. Meanwhile, Mary was so little aware of this sentiment in the mind of her benefactress, that she thought she could not better evince her gratitude than by showing how much she profited by the instructions thus bestowed.

Three years had passed since Mary entered the family of Mrs. Humphrey. Many who knew the former, talked of her good fortune in meeting with such a friend, and being, as they called, brought up to be a gentlewoman. But in this envied situation there were many trials to encounter. Louisa, indeed, always behaved towards her

young friend with the affection of a sister; but Mrs. Humphrey, though on her daughter's account she treated Mary with apparent kindness, yet frequently made her feel her dependence.

From the visitors, also, who frequented the house, Mary experienced occasional slights, of a trifling nature, perhaps, and such as, had those from whom she received them been her equals, she would scarcely have regarded; but which, circumstanced as she was, were felt keenly by her: so that she could not, at times, help repining at her present situation, though she would have dreaded being thrown back upon her former life.

During the early part of Mary's residence in the house of Mrs. Humphrey, a weekly visit to her home had formed one of her principal enjoyments; and, though she persuaded herself that she felt the same warmth as ever towards her family, yet it was not to be concealed, that she experienced less pleasure than formerly, in visiting the homely cottage of her parents. One evening, having called on old Mrs. Darnwell, the widow asked her if she was going home; Mary replied in the affirmative. "I am glad of that (said the old woman), for your father was complaining

yesterday how long it was since you had been there."

"My father? (she repeated), I am not going there."

"I thought, my dear, you said you were going home."

"So I did (said Mary, colouring). I meant I was going to Mrs. Humphrey's."

"Ah Mary! (said the widow), you no longer regard your father's house as your home."

Mary felt the reproach, and began to justify herself. "Indeed, Mrs. Darnwell, I love them all as well as ever—indeed I do; but lately, whenever I go to my father's, I meet so many vulgar disagreeable people; and the place is so uncomfortable: then the children—poor things, I know it is not their fault—but they are so rude and ill-brought-up, and every thing is so different from what it used to be."

"No, Mary (replied the widow), every thing at your home is the same as ever: it is you that have changed. I have seen some time, that you are beginning to be ashamed of your family."

Mary was the more hurt at this accusation, as she was conscious there was some justice in it. She had, indeed, often reproached herself for the

feeling, but did not imagine it was apparent to any but herself. She took leave of her monitor, however, with assurances of looking carefully to what she had said, and went to Mrs. Humphrey's with some sense of her own unworthiness.

Some time after this, as the Eastwoods were sitting at their homely repast, Mary entered. She was in high spirits, and had come to take leave of them. Mrs. Humphrey, who began to be tired of the country, formed a sudden resolution of spending the winter in London. Louisa and her friend were of course delighted with the anticipation of the amusements which the metropolis would afford them; and it was to acquaint her parents with this plan that the short visit was now paid.

Every thing appeared to prove that Mary was fixed in the favour of her patroness.

“It is evident (said James Eastwood), that Mrs. Humphrey looks upon Mary as if she was her own child: what a lucky thing that she should have come to live here, and that she should take such a liking to Mary.”

“Ah! (added his wife), only think that Mary should have all her clothes made exactly the same as Miss Humphrey, just as if they were sisters. Well, she may thank me for it—it was all along of

my giving that geranium to the lady; and her seeing my children, she admired how well they looked; and, says she, I wish my girl had such rosy cheeks: and, says I, ma'am, she will soon have if she comes to live here; and Mrs. Humphrey seemed so pleased at my saying so, and bespoke the eggs: and I sent Mary the next day, and made her put on her best bonnet, that she might look nice—so it was all through me."

In short, the kindness of Mrs. Humphrey, and her own good management, formed a theme for Dame Eastwood for the rest of the day. In the course of a fortnight Mary sent a letter to her parents, filled with the wonders and delights of the metropolis. A length of time then elapsed: the father began to be uneasy at not hearing from his daughter; Dame Eastwood fretted and fidgetted, accusing Mary with having forgotten them; but when they had given up the expectation, a letter came—it was sealed with black, and contained but a few lines. Poor Mary wrote in the deepest sorrow—her beloved Louisa was dead. It appeared that Miss Humphrey, whose health had always been delicate, had, in going to some place of public amusement, caught a cold, which had proved fatal.

The Eastwoods were much shocked at this intelligence, lamenting the early fate of this amiable young lady, and sincerely sympathizing in the feelings of the mother. After a while, it was natural that their thoughts should turn on their own concerns. What would now be done about Mary? There could scarcely, however, be a doubt about her: surely the adopted sister of Louisa would, for the sake of her child, be dear to the mother. The parents were confident of this, but felt anxious to learn particulars.

Mary, however, wrote no more; but they heard from other quarters, that the house where Mrs. Humphrey had lived was now to be sold. The lady could not endure to return to the place: this was quite natural; but it was a matter of some vexation to the Eastwoods, as Mary would now be entirely separated from them. They, however, consoled themselves that she would be well provided for.

Not many days after, a stage coach stopped near the cottage of the Eastwoods. Such a circumstance in a country village is always a matter of interest and curiosity, especially to the younger sort, among whom the little Eastwoods were the foremost to watch the passengers. The children

returned almost immediately, announcing, with a shout of joy, that their sister was coming; and the next moment poor Mary, looking very pale and sorrowful, entered the cottage; and it was presently discovered that she was come to remain there. The fact, as before observed, was, that all the favour that Mary received from Mrs. Humphrey was on account of Louisa; and, without any consideration for having accustomed the poor girl to a life of ease and indulgence, she now dismissed her, alleging, that the sight of Mary was painful, by constantly reminding her of her own child.

The consternation of the family, at this unexpected turn of affairs, may easily be imagined. The lady had not let Mary depart without some marks of her bounty; but what were these in comparison with the expectations which had been raised?

The father had looked forward with sanguine hopes to the prospects of his daughter, and Dame Eastwood had built her "castles in the air," as to the future advantages arising to her own family, through the means of Mary. All these hopes were crushed at once.

The grief of Mary (who was an affectionate girl), for the loss of her friend, made her at first think

less of her own situation ; but very little time passed before the hardships of returning to her lowly condition were felt very severely. Her attempts now to assist in household concerns were so awkward, as to put the patience of her step-mother to a severe test. Dame Eastwood loudly protested against Mrs. Humphrey, who, she declared, had pampered and spoiled the girl, and returned her upon their hands absolutely good for nothing. There appeared, indeed, some truth in this : Mary had obtained a taste for acquirements which she could no longer pursue, and was accustomed to habits which it was difficult to lay aside. Her principal consolation was in the friendship of the widow Darnwell, who, indeed, was far from lamenting the change which had taken place, and still held close to her favourite maxim, that whatever happened was for the best. But she knew how to make allowance for her young friend, and did not expect her to be at once cheerful and reconciled.

It began now to be considered, that Mary, who had entered her sixteenth year, ought to be getting her bread ; but the question was, what kind of place would be fit for her. She had been at home about half a year, and, with much pains on the

part of her step-mother, was beginning to be a little useful, when a situation at length offered, which appeared likely to suit her. This was at a farm-house in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Beechum, with whom Mary was about to live, was a very kind-hearted good woman, whose only weakness was a fondness for whatever she thought genteel. But all who knew her easily overlooked this little foible, for the sake of her other excellent qualities. Mrs. Beechum was in years, and wished for a young person who would be able sometimes to assist in the dairy; but principally as a companion to herself, for the good dame was fond of talking, and had no one to talk to; her son, who managed the farm, being too fully engaged to afford her much of his company.

One thing Mrs. Beechum especially required was a person who had been well brought up, and Mary Eastwood therefore seemed likely to answer the purpose; and it turned out so accordingly. In this situation Mary did not meet the refinement and elegance she had been used to, but she experienced no caprice, nor was she subjected to any mortifications.

When residing at Mrs. Humphrey's, her time had often hung heavily on her hands; she had

now sufficient employ to render leisure agreeable: nor had the time been lost which she had spent at the great house, for it had made Mary exactly the person that Mrs. Beechum admired, whose prejudice in favour of gentility has already been remarked. She grew daily more satisfied with her choice, often declaring that there were few girls like Mary Eastwood, who was at once a good housewife and a complete gentlewoman.

Indeed, so complete was the favourite thought, that her advance to a relationship with the old lady was a step all soon anticipated. The son had been so long in the habit of hearing his mother extol the merits of Mary, that his eye and his thoughts took the same course with those of his mother; and Mary Eastwood became the mistress of the farm, and was in a situation to assist her family to the utmost of their wishes.

Thankful and happy, she was now willing to acknowledge, with her excellent old friend, that the trials she had endured had, indeed, been *all for the best.*

THE MAGIC ROSE.

THE MAGIC ROSE.

THE court of King Pharamond, like that of most of the Eastern monarchs, was at once splendid and powerful; and so prosperous was his reign, and so just his government, that it was confidently believed his measures were directed by some wise and benevolent genius, who afforded both counsel in his affairs, and protection to his person.

The monarch, however, was advanced in years, and, feeling that he could not exert himself as formerly, for the benefit of his people, resolved to consign his crown and kingdom to the government of a beloved and only son. Proclamation to this effect was accordingly made; and, in order that the Prince Abdallah's accession to the throne should be a matter of rejoicing to his subjects, and that his reign might commence under the most happy auspices, Pharamond commanded the prison doors to be thrown open, and all captives,

except such as were confined for heinous crimes, to be set at liberty; and extended, in a more than ordinary degree, his benevolence throughout his kingdom.

The day on which Abdallah was to receive the crown from the hand of his father was also appointed for the celebration of his nuptials with the Princess Finella, the daughter of a neighbouring monarch; and the most splendid preparations were making for the occasion, which was looked forward to as a universal festivity throughout the nation.

In the meantime, the public expectation and curiosity were strongly excited to behold the intended bride of the future monarch. Report had decked her in every charm, and had equally gifted her with every virtue. Her arrival was hailed with every demonstration of joy and delight, and, as some time must elapse before the solemnization of her marriage, the princess took every opportunity of gratifying her future subjects with a sight of her person, and winning all hearts by her gracious demeanour.

On one of these occasions, while the splendid equipage of Finella was waiting, and the multitude was gazing with wonder and astonishment

on the superb chariot of ivory and gold, drawn by eight milk-white mules, whose costly trappings dazzled the eyes of the beholder, there stood a female among the throng, who alone looked sad in the midst of the universal gaiety, and who appeared to partake neither of the wonder nor of the delight expressed by those around her. Grief and penury were strongly marked on her features, yet mingled with an expression of patient endurance, which could not fail to excite interest.

The Princess at length appeared, and was about to ascend the chariot, when her attention was arrested by the object already described, who was endeavouring to press forward. To anticipate, as she imagined, the wishes of this forlorn creature, Finella ordered one of her attendants to present the female with a purse of gold.

Disposed, as the multitude was, to applaud every action of their future queen, this token of her sensibility, in so soon marking and relieving distress, was hailed with loud shouts and tumultuous approbation.

The Princess in the meantime enjoyed the most pleasing reflections, and could not help feeling flattered and elated at the admiration and applause of the populace; and it is but justice to

add, at the pleasure she experienced in having, as she imagined, relieved an unfortunate being.

Nevertheless, on her return, Finella was surprised and somewhat chagrined to see the object of her bounty still standing in the same place, with the same aspect of anxious solicitude. As the Princess approached, the woman raised her hand, in which she held a paper, and again made an effort to make her way through the crowd.

Her manner and action were too remarkable to pass unobserved; and an officer, in attendance, took the paper, and handed it to the Princess. On the outside of the petition was written—"ONLY BY YOU."

A glance, however, showed the petition to be a lengthened detail of misery and sufferings, and, though her intention was to examine its contents, yet, finding the perusal of a long memorial grow tedious, and having many other things to occupy her attention, the Princess laid it aside for the present, resolving, however, to read it at the first opportunity. But what Finella called an opportunity never occurred, and the difficulty, from being deferred, seemed to increase.

Several days had passed, when, one morning, when the Princess was standing at the window of

her palace, she again perceived the unfortunate female stationed near the gate. The sight of this wretched woman, by reminding Finella of her own neglect, gave her pain; but, in proportion to the self-reproach she felt, the Princess experienced a degree of anger towards the object which occasioned it, and ordered her slaves to send the woman away; but with an assurance, however, that her petition should be attended to; and Finella, accordingly, sat down to the task: but the obligation she considered herself under of performing it, rendered it wearisome; and the circumstance of her favourite blue ape breaking his chain, and doing some trifling mischief, was reason enough to convince her, that her mind was too disturbed to continue the employment.

The memorial was again laid aside; time passed on in a round of amusements, and the affair was entirely forgotten.

The important day was at length announced, in which the nuptials of Abdallah and the Princess Finella were to be celebrated. On the evening preceding it, as the attendants on the Princess were arranging the costly jewels, which were to adorn the royal bride, a paper, from among them, fell to the ground; and Finella discovered, to her

consternation, that it was the neglected petition. In silent shame and vexation she looked for some moments on the memorial, as if irresolute how to act; when one of her females (who had a larger share of her confidence than any of the rest, and who felt a sincere interest in the fate of the unfortunate petitioner) took this opportunity of entreating her mistress to examine the paper; but Finella was displeased with the interference of her slave; and the rest of her attendants, unwilling that the Princess's mind should be disturbed by (what they deemed) a matter of no importance, used their utmost endeavours to divert her attention to other things.

This, under existing circumstances, was not difficult, and she quieted her conscience with the reflection, that it would always be in her power to compensate, by her bounty, for any injury that might arise to the party. But this illusion was only momentary—in what she had perused, enough had been seen to show the affliction was not of a nature to be relieved by pecuniary aid: this, together with the circumstance of the paper falling from a casket, which, to the best of her recollection, had been guarded with care, and never opened till the present moment, made it appear

as if the memorial had been placed there by some extraordinary power, for the purpose of attracting her particular attention ; and the bias of her mind was again swayed towards informing herself of its import. At this moment the Prince Abdallah entered, and gave, at once, a turn to her thoughts on the subject of the memorial, and, indeed, on every other unconnected with the splendid vision of power and happiness which now filled her imagination.

By the earliest dawn of the ensuing day, the inhabitants of the city were awakened with the sounds of music, and all was immediately in motion : the houses were forsaken, and every individual, from the highest to the lowest rank, appeared clad in his best array. Friends were seen congratulating each other ; even enemies forgot their animosities ; and, in the public rejoicing, all private affairs were for the time suspended.

What gave a peculiar character to the present joy was, that the reign of Abdallah would commence, not on the death of a beloved monarch, but under his immediate auspices ; assisting, by his council, the inexperience of a young prince, or mediating in matters which might affect the interest of his subjects.

It was during this burst of exultation, and while in momentary expectation of the pompous cavalcade that was to precede and accompany the subjects of their enthusiastic regard, that an aged and venerable man appeared amidst the throng. It was the dervise Ibrahim, the inhabitant of a secluded retreat among the distant mountains, who, for forty years, had never quitted his cell. He was immediately recognised by the populace; for so much was Ibrahim famed for his wisdom and sanctity, that neither a gleam of the campfire but had visited his retreat, or heard the tones of his oracular wisdom.

The unexpected appearance of this holy man was also hailed with every demonstration of delight; but the joy which his presence inspired was somewhat damped, as those immediately near him observed the solemnity, not to say the gloom, of his aspect.

"My children (said the benevolent dervise), it grieves me to check your joy; but, alas! I fear it will not be of long duration; the tidings having reached me that the sceptre was about to pass from the hands of our venerated monarch into those of his son, although I had resolved never more to mingle with mankind, yet an earnest desire to behold

a Prince who was to succeed so benevolent and gifted a father induced me to quit, for the last time, my solitary abode.

“ Towards the end of my toilsome journey, overcome with fatigue, I sought repose beneath the branches of a spreading palm, almost within the precincts of your walls: but my slumbers were disturbed by the visions of the night; from the dark omens of which I read too sure a prognostic of approaching misfortune.”

The old man’s speech struck a momentary terror into his auditors; yet, notwithstanding the reverence with which they looked up to him, and the implicit confidence which was always placed in all his words, on this occasion the impression of his prophecy lost much of its effect; for how could apprehension long exist, when every thing bore the appearance of felicity? when the air was impregnated with odour, and the ground strewed with flowers? when no sounds but of mirth and exultation met the ear? Who, at such a moment, could hearken to dark prognostics of coming evil?

The signal was now given: the gorgeous standard of the empire, raised on the pinnacle of the highest temple, proclaimed to the populace that the

procession had begun its march towards the gates of that sanctuary where the ceremony of uniting the Prince Abdallah to his betrothed bride was to take place.

Many now rushed towards the spot, to obtain a nearer view of the illustrious personages—the principal objects in this vast display of magnificence: while others, more judiciously, planted themselves in sight of a temporary fabric, erected beneath a triumphal arch, where, in the view of his subjects, the Prince was to receive the crown. It was this spot that, after the nuptial ceremony, became the centre of attraction. It was here that the resplendent orb of day seemed to shed his brightest beams, as if to aid the glories of the scene.

The old monarch, his son, and the Princess Finella, had now reached the platform, on their return, attended by the principal officers of state. The music, which had accompanied the procession, now ceased; and the people, in silent respect, beheld the diadem pass from the venerable Pharamond to the brow of his son, who, kneeling, received it from the hands of his father.

At this moment the sounds of harmony swelled in melodious strains, but were soon lost in the

tumultuous acclamations of the people; and the names of Pharamond, Abdallah, and Finella, were mingled in their accents of joy.

Scarce, however, had these expressions of gladness ceased, and while the multitude were still gazing on a spectacle of such splendour as had never before met their sight, on a sudden the glittering pageant seemed fading from their view. For a moment each individual imagined that his own vision was defective; but there was short space to doubt. Although it was noon-day, and the sun shone in all its splendour, a deep and dense vapour enveloped all below. The sounds of music were no longer heard, the voices of the people died away into an awful and death-like silence, and, in breathless expectation, all waited the result of this fearful phenomenon.

Gradually the mist dispersed, and objects again became visible; all eyes were directed to the scene of their former admiration—its splendour was not diminished; but the actions and gestures of those who occupied the space sufficiently testified that some disastrous event had taken place. The confusion now increased, and the anxiety of the remote spectators was intense: at length the murmur reached them, that the Princess Finella

was missing. It was some time, however, before this intelligence could be received as a matter of belief: but yet, after the most diligent search, the Princess was nowhere to be found.

The day, which had begun in rejoicing, ended in confusion and lamentation; and the words of the dervies were remembered as to well auguring the present calamity.

But, if a sense of this misfortune sunk so deep in the hearts of their subjects, what were the feelings of Abdallah, and his venerable sire? While, however, the young man was indulging a hopeless sorrow, the experience and wisdom of the old monarch taught him, that nothing could happen but through the permission of that power which had always sustained his steps while in the path of rectitude; and he doubted not but the events of that day would terminate in some future advantage. If the Princess was unworthy of the throne, it had been shown by some invisible agent, in thus occasioning her sudden disappearance.

The conjectures of his son ran not in so moderate a course. He was on the very brink of despair, avoided all intercourse with society, and sought the most hidden recesses of his palace and gardens, to ponder on the mysterious event.

In one of these retreats, when the moon had risen just above the broad cedars which skirted the path he had taken, his attention was rivetted by a form which rose before him. No one, he well knew, would venture to obtrude on his solitude; and he was soon convinced that the being which now crossed his path was not of mortal mould.

In the pause of wonder and fear, which chained him to the spot, the voice of the genius was heard :—

“ Prince Abdallah, I am the presiding power to whom it is allotted to watch over the fate of your kingdom. The virtues of your father have given you an interest with me, and I now present you with that which will serve as a clue to recover the amiable Princess, whose loss you so deeply deplore.

“ You must, also, be instructed by experience to avoid the same error which has thus suddenly withdrawn her from the prospect of happiness which awaited her.

“ Take this casket : it contains a rose, whose properties will enable you to find the path which leads to the recovery of Finella. Whenever your steps are directed aright, the flower will assume

the most vivid bloom ; otherwise it will retain the pallid hue it now wears. 'It is only at the close of the day you can consult its power with effect.'

'On saying which the form disappeared, and the shining gift was at the feet of Abdallah.'

Recovering from the astonishment occasioned by the vision, the Prince fell into a reverie ; his thoughts vibrated between hope and disappointment. The language of the geni was oracularly ambiguous : it was, however, of a kind to animate him to exertion, for it pointed, as he thought, to adventure and enterprise, which would furnish him with an opportunity of proving his own prowess, and the love he bore Finella.

With the ardour of youth, he determined on taking leave of the monarch, his father, and issuing forth into the world.

In the rapid course of his thoughts, however, the words of the hermit Ibrahim struck upon his mind : he had predicted the calamity—he might assist him in explaining the present mystery ; accordingly, he determined on first visiting that holy man.

On arriving at the abode of the hermit, he was listened to with the deepest attention.

" My son (said the sage Ibrahim), I may not

impart to you the hidden mystery of the invisible power that has deigned to visit you.

“ You tell me that you are prepared to encounter danger and difficulty : these are not always in the path of honour. Your undertaking may be of a nature far more perilous than your imagination can form : look well to your own deeds, and consult the monitor which the kindness of the genius has furnished you with.”

The Prince returned, much disappointed, from his conference with the dervise Ibrahim, whose words were as obscure as those of the genius. . It was, however, certain that Finella was under the power of enchantment, from which it appeared that Abdallah alone was destined to rescue her ; but, as the direct means had not been pointed out, nothing remained for him but to follow the bent of his inclinations, which led him to imagine that some great adventure was to be achieved.

On consulting the monarch, his father, although Pharamond could not direct his son's course towards the accomplishment of the undertaking, yet, as it might be advantageous, in many respects, for him to visit the different parts of his kingdom, or even to extend his researches beyond its limits, the King approved Abdallah's resolution.

As the Prince was to perform this exploit alone and unattended, but little time was necessary to prepare for the occasion ; and, without further delay, he set out on his journey, leaving it to the discretion of his father to account for his absence, and to resume the reigns of government during that period.

Abdallah travelled for a considerable time without any thing remarkable occurring : he failed not, however, to consult the colour of his rose, according to the directions which he had received ; but when, at the close of each succeeding day, the Prince could not observe the smallest change in the magic flower, his hopes and patience began to forsake him. It was on a sultry noon, when Abdallah, in order to rest himself, and his weary steed, alighted, and sought shelter from the burning heat of the sun, beneath the wide-spreading branches of a palm-tree.

He had not been there long, before a stranger approached, and seated himself also under the refreshing shade.

Though the travellers saluted each other with the greatest courtesy, yet both seemed too much occupied with their own reflections, to enter into conversation ; till, after a short time, when the

stranger arose to depart, the Prince observing how weary he still was, could not help remarking, that the little rest which the traveller had allowed himself could be scarcely sufficient to enable him to pursue his journey.

“It is very true (said the stranger), but no rest can refresh me, short of the home where my anxious family are hourly expecting my arrival: but this, alas! they must expect for some time longer.”

“What distance, then, are you from that abode, at which you so desire to arrive, that you cannot allow yourself the rest you ought to take?” inquired the Prince.

“Unforeseen delays have taken place in my journey (replied the stranger), and the end of it might be accomplished by the close of the day, if I dared take the shortest route; but, by the circuitous course which I must pursue, I shall not reach my home for two days longer.”

“And what is it you apprehend (inquired the Prince), that you dare not take the nearest way?”

“My direct road (replied the traveller), would be to cross the Black Desert; and you may judge, however weary, or however anxious I might be to

see my wife and family, whether I would take that direction."

"I am a stranger in this part of the country (said Abdallah), and never before heard of such a place. What are the dangers to be dreaded in passing through it?"

"You must be a stranger, indeed, not to have heard of a place the name of which makes everyone that knows it tremble. What the peril of it may be I cannot precisely say; report speaks of it as being not only the abode of serpents and dragons, but as inhabited by the most malignant and powerful demons. In a word, it is full of snares and enchantments."

Abdallah listened eagerly to the words of the stranger, confident that he had now gained the clue which would lead to the enterprise he sought, and, therefore, earnestly entreated to be directed the nearest road to the Black Desert.

Nothing could equal the surprise of the traveller, who imagined that curiosity alone could impel the Prince to this rash step; and he used his utmost endeavours to dissuade him from what he believed would be his destruction.

But nothing could induce Abdallah to change his resolution; and all that the stranger could

urge of the difficulties he would encounter, served but the more to convince him these were the dangers he was called upon to surmount; not doubting but that, in a spot surrounded by the powers of enchantment, the unfortunate Finella passed her days in confinement, and waited with grief and anxiety the hour of deliverance.

The traveller, finding that his arguments were of no avail to dissuade the Prince from his undertaking, with much reluctance gave Abdallah the direction he required; “ Which (continued the stranger) if you carefully observe, a few hours will bring you to the confines of the Desert.

“ You will perceive your approach by the death-like silence that prevails, and the total absence of every living thing: not a blade of grass on the ground, not an insect on the wing—all is sterility and desolation; arrived on the borders of this fatal place, you will see an uprooted pine; then pause—when you have passed that object, you will have entered the Black Desert.”

Abdallah thanked the stranger, and they parted; the latter to pursue the tedious route that he trusted would bring him in safety to his home, and the Prince in an opposite course, to the achievement of his adventure.

So much were the thoughts of Abdallah engrossed by the idea of the enterprise which appeared to await him, that time passed unheeded, till the fast-fading light at length reminded him that, according to the stranger's account, he ought, by this, to have reached the place of his destination. It was now that the Prince perceived he had taken a wrong direction.

Vexed and disappointed, he turned to retrace his steps; but darkness was so fast approaching, that objects were scarcely visible, and Abdallah was soon aware that he had so completely deviated from the tract, that even to gain the spot from whence he had set out was now impracticable; he thought it most expedient, therefore, to take the shelter of a grove in which he found himself, and patiently wait the approach of morning.

The early dawn, however, afforded no clue to his pursuit; nor did any vestige remain, by which he could retrace his steps: a space was before him, which, from its silence and solitude, might have led him to imagine he was on the confines of the Black Desert, but for the marks of fertility that met his eye on every side; but this was not the fertility of cultivation—it was a waste of luxuriant wildness.

There was nothing now for him, but to continue his way until he should meet with some object that might forward his search, and bring him to some being who could assist his steps. The day was far advanced, when, to his infinite satisfaction, he saw some smoke arise on the extreme verge of the horizon; hoping, from this circumstance, that he was approaching some human habitation, he hastened onwards, and at length found himself at the entrance of a town or village, the appearance of which, notwithstanding Abdallah was absorbed in the object of his own enterprise, could not fail to attract his attention.

Most of the buildings had fallen to decay; the inhabitants, whose miserable appearance created in the Prince a mingled feeling of pity and disgust, were sauntering about in listless idleness, as if wanting a motive to rouse them to activity; even childhood seemed to partake of the character of sloth and indolence, instead of the sportive gambols that usually mark that age.

The Prince looked on this spectacle of misery and wretchedness, wondering to what province it belonged, if indeed it could be said to belong to any. On inquiring, Abdallah found that he had

considerably passed the frontiers of his twin kingdom, and had entered a neighbouring state.

On the part of these people, the first appearance of the Prince created not only surprise, but terror: as he approached, some fled; others, who退ed more slowly, kept their eyes on his path, as if in expectation of seeing him followed. Finding, however, that he continued his advance alone, they became less cautious, and gave him the opportunity of discovering the route he had taken, and the situation he was in respecting the distance from his own kingdom.

For other particulars, Abdallah, addressing an aged man, —

“ What, my friend (said the Prince), occasions the fear which my presence inspires? and wherefore are the buildings of your village suffered to fall in ruins, when there appears no want of means, either in the soil or in its produce, to better your condition? ”

“ Stranger (replied the old man), for such you must be, seeing you come not in the shape of a destroyer, know, that this once flourishing place has been abandoned, by the neglect or weakness of its rulers, to the wasteful depredations of robbers

and banditti, who, while plunder could be had, never failed to visit with fire and sword, carrying off the fruits of the earth, and the property we possessed, till our few defenders were slain, and famine made our country no longer an object of regard.

“Thus, you see (continued the old inhabitant), our only security is having nothing to lose; for, where no protection can be afforded, there can be no encouragement to cultivate the ground for the benefit only of the violent and powerful.”

“Truly (said the Prince), your case is pitiable; it may one day be in my power, however, to strike out some plan for bettering your fortune, if you are not wanting to yourselves. In the meantime you can, perhaps, afford me shelter for a single night, and inform me in what direction I may find the Black Desert.”

“The Black Desert? (re-echoed the old man), can any thing induce you to take that road? What seek you there but danger, in its most terrific form, and the certainty of destruction? For who ever entered the confines of that place, and returned to tell the tale of darkness that belongs to its history?”

“I have heard as much (said Abdallah), and it

is of small import to speak of dangers to which no one can give a tangible shape: I must judge for myself. Can this place afford me the rest I require?"

The old man led the way to the hovel he possessed; placed before Abdallah the spontaneous growth of what their soil afforded, which, from its fertility, was far beyond what, in more flourishing states, could be procured by the labour and industry of man. So that the famine of the village, which had been so lamentably deplored, arose equally from indolence, as from violence and rapine.

With reflections upon the situation of such a people, and the capability of such a place being made the abode of comfort and security, Abdallah retired to the place pointed out for his repose, after receiving from his host a more detailed route to the entrance of the Black Desert, than had been afforded him on a former occasion.

Although the thoughts of the adventure he was about to achieve occupied his mind, it could not prevent him from dwelling long upon the plans he had conceived of relieving, by his efforts, the miserable objects which chance had brought under his view.

He had, from time to time, in the course of his journey, at the appointed hour, examined the complexion of the gifted rose; but in no instance had it changed its pallid hue. On the evening of this day, however, to the great joy of the Prince, a slight tinge of red was perceptible on its delicate leaves. The appearance of the flower revived his hopes, and he fell asleep, in the full assurance, that now he was in the way to accomplish some adventure with which the deliverance of Finella was connected.

The morning dawned, and Abdallah took his departure, with fresh assurances to his host that it should not be long ere he returned, to assist the inhabitants of this neglected spot in resuming that station in society of which they seemed even to have lost the sight, as well as the hopes.

The old man thanked him for his intended kindness; but, it was evident, without much faith in the promise thus made, under the circumstances of peril in which it was given.

The air was balmy and refreshing; the spirits of the Prince were revived with hope, and his thoughts were divided between the object of his search, and the forlorn condition of the beings he had just left.

" Could I have spared the time (he mentally ejaculated), how easily would it have been to have placed before them the advantages of unanimity, industry, and economy ; but I am bound to an enterprise that far outweighs every other consideration."

He then reflected on the charms of her who had been snatched from his arms at the moment when felicity was, in appearance, within his grasp ; nor were the difficulties forgot which he had encountered in obtaining the hand of this amiable Princess. The counsel of his father was also remembered, who, though he did not warn him to shun every danger, bade him pause upon every undertaking ; and some misgivings came across his mind in respect to the adventure he now meditated : but hitherto he had met with nothing which could put his courage to the proof ; and where no danger was, there could be little gained. When the dervise of the mountain had told him they were of a nature not easily imagined, the terrors of the Black Desert seemed distinctly pointed out.

The evening of the first day brought him within sight of some distant objects, which seemed deserving of observation : all, till now, had been

level, and for the most part open. The Prince's view became more confined at every step ; and he chose the foot of an eminence, which presented something like the commencement of a road, as his resting-place for that night.

On ascending the steep at the first blush of morning, the way began to take an appearance of wildness and desolation ; the trees were stunted in growth, and the verdure was thin ; and, in many places, hardly visible. The inequality of the ground gave him little choice of road ; he was constrained to take that where his horse could find footing ; but this, while it could be found, assured him there was no other visible way. His thoughts took a turn less favourable than on the preceding day.

In this way Abdallah journeyed on through what might well be called a labyrinth of rocks ; his horizon sometimes so bounded as to make him think there was no outlet beyond what appeared immediately before him ; but no actual hindrance, on his arrival at the spot, opposed his further progress. At length a more open space appeared ; but the shades of evening were gaining upon him.

The road, however, presented no difficulties, in comparison with that which he had passed ;

and he was enabled, by the twilight, to continue his onward course at a speed he had not before ventured; and so weary did his generous steed appear of the inaction of his former movements, that he bounded forward, as if enjoying the freedom of the range.

The increasing darkness at length constrained him to pick his way with great caution, for now it was evident that objects of some kind opposed his way. There remained nothing for him but to wait the return of daylight, and beguile the hours as best he might. Sleep was not allowed him—a small space only could be traversed, which, with the bridle in his hand, he paced, to keep himself in action. No sounds met his ear, and the dreariness of his watching was not relieved till the first ray of light began to show itself.

Abdallah then began to ruminate on what prospect would now open upon him: gradually objects became visible, and, as they caught his eager view, he did not hesitate to believe he was within the precincts of the Black Desert.

He was confirmed in this opinion by seeing, not far from the spot where he stood, the uprooted pine, which the stranger he first met had pointed

out for his observation. It was now that the Prince prepared for the encounter, whatever it might be; and strained his sight to discover the remoter objects, for the light was still insufficient to give a clear view of their character. From what he could discover, however, a massy pile rose before him, and figures, of a gigantic stature, were ranged in its vicinity.

Abdallah now paused, in momentary expectation of some sound or motion, that might further aid his knowledge of the objects before him; but neither sound nor motion gave signal to guide him. With cautious steps the Prince now made his way, as far as he could, to the pile of building, which he kept in sight, till his course was interrupted by a screen of pines, which occasioned him to take a more oblique direction; but, the moment he again caught a sight of what he imagined to be a structure of no common dimensions, he discovered it to be a huge assemblage of rocks, which, through the obscurity of the morning mist, had deceived his vision.

After the surprise and disappointment which this discovery produced, he fell into the following reflections:—

“ Did not every account speak of the Desert's

being enchanted ground? "Did not the genius appoint me to the task of delivering the Princess from the power of enchantment?" These reflections brought to his recollection, that from the time he had left the village of poverty and wretchedness, the division and hurry of his thoughts had prevented him from examining the colour of his rose; and the hour was still at a distance when he might consult its token.

The place he was in presented nothing but images of extreme desolation and solitude—wandering among the rude masses of rocks and pines, he came to the entrance of a cave, near which the head of a lance, covered with rust, was seen. The Desert then had been inhabited. Perhaps within this rocky cavern there might still be those who, though without the powers of enchanters, would give him an opportunity of proving his courage.

Listening for some time attentively, all remained silent as death. On entering, the space became more ample, and well fitted for the haunt of banditti. Around were some scattered fragments of broken weapons; whence it was natural to conclude, that the character which had been given to this desolate place arose from its being

the abode of robbers, who might be willing enough to aid the idea of its supernatural horrors, as it would secure their retreat from the chance of discovery; and, should any unfortunate traveller wander among them, it was not difficult to obtain his silence.

The day had been consumed in unavailing search—the small stock of food with which the Prince had furnished himself was nearly exhausted—the scanty herbage which grew at the root of the pines was far too little for his now wearied steed—and, for the first time, hope seemed to abandon Abdallah. In this dilemma he waited anxiously the hour when the sun should dip beneath the horizon, to examine the colour of “the Magic Rose.” The period came, and its colourless leaves put the finish to the adventure of the Black Desert.

Abdallah was now convinced that he had pursued a wrong course, and missed the opportunity he had been so anxiously seeking, of recovering the Princess Finella.

But he was still perplexed as to the way in which he had lost that opportunity. Surely the genius had subjected him to too difficult an un-

desirous, in not having more distinctly pointed out the method of its accomplishment.

At all events the faded hue of the magic-flute plainly denoted that those means were not to be sought in this place.

His determination was now to quit this dismal solitude with all imaginable speed; but, with his haste and eagerness, on the preceding day, Abdallah had forgot to mark any particular object that might serve as a clue to guidance on his return.

This night, however, must be passed in the Desert, and the cave he had discovered would afford some better shelter than he had obtained on the preceding. It was not without some alarm, lest the former occupiers of this shelter might think proper to revisit it, that he took up his short abode; and it was rather after watching than repose, that he saw the dawn break in upon his view.

The morning came, but it only showed a waste of wilderness; and nothing seemed to offer a choice of path. With doubt and hesitation he proceeded on a course which he imagined lay in the direction of his former route, and which, he

hoped, he was now retracing; but, after several hours, Abdallah discovered, to his consternation, that he had only been making a circuitous course, as he found himself within sight of the cave where he had taken up his lodging.

Another effort was made, but equally ineffectually: so far from any appearance of escape, he seemed to have plunged deeper into the bosom of the Desert.

That courage which would have encountered danger in the shape of an enemy, or any obstacle opposed to him in a tangible form, now forsook him. In utter hopelessness, he threw himself from his horse, and gave way to the bitterest forebodings—he must sink a prey to famine! He had left an empire, and the command of millions, to find a grave in the obscurity of a Desert! These reflections, however, gave place to others, more becoming the character he hoped to deserve. The interference of the genius at least implied good, and should he be wanting to himself? With better hopes, he again mounted his horse, and while he held the rein with slackened hand, uncertain what direction to pursue, the animal, which before seemed nearly spent, suddenly moved forward with renewed vigour: this appeared a good omen, and

Abdallah determined to trust to the guidance of its instinct.

For a considerable time, however, from the dry stony soil over which they passed, the Prince had no reason to imagine that he was more likely to extricate himself from the labyrinths of the Desert than before. Yet his hopes were kept alive by the confident pace of his steed; and when, at length, the moon broke from the dark clouds which had hitherto obscured its splendour, Abdallah perceived a clump of trees, which, though of stunted growth, were of a character different from any that had before appeared in this barren spot; and, by the time that the dawn first broke upon his sight, the Prince found himself once more approaching to what had the appearance of life and vegetation.

It was evident that he had left the Black Desert, by a nearer and different way from that by which he had entered it; but he was still at a loss to know what part of the country he had now reached. For the present, however, Abdallah, happy and thankful to have escaped a place of such gloom and solitude, continued his course, till, arriving at a meadow affording pasturage, the Prince alighted for the purpose of allowing his

jaded horse the rest and refreshment he so much needed.

Seating himself on the green turf, reflecting on the past, and revolving plans for the future, he observed an aged shepherd coming towards him. Abdallah, who for so long an interval had not seen a human being, hailed his appearance with joy.

The old man seemed much surprised at the sight of the Prince, and, when the latter told him from whence he came, and related the adventures of the last two days, the shepherd's astonishment was increased. He seemed to think the Prince's escape a matter almost miraculous.

Upon further conversation, Abdallah found that the old man did not entertain the general notion which had obtained belief, of the Desert's being enchanted; but he confirmed the idea that it was the haunt of robbers.

At the hut of the old shepherd, Abdallah found both food and rest. When he had remained a sufficient time to recruit his strength; and gain the direction by which he should next proceed, the Prince, after thanking and rewarding his hospitable host, again set forward.

But far different were the thoughts which now

filled his mind, from those he had indulged at the commencement of his journey. A sense of humiliation struck upon his imagination, on returning to his capital without having achieved a single adventure. Abdallah thought, too, of the time spent in a fruitless pursuit, which might have been dedicated to more useful employment; for instance, in endeavouring to ameliorate the condition of the neglected inhabitants of the village he had passed on his way. Once more the Prince projected plans for the benefit of these people; but his views were distant, and his reflections on this subject soon gave way to those which more deeply interested him.

In the meantime Abdallah neglected not, on each evening, to consult the fairy's token; but still no change in its hue appeared to inspire him with hope. It was evident he had mistaken the nature of that enterprise, and those difficulties which had been shadowed out by the interference of the genius and the hints of Ibrahim.

It now occurred to him, that the time and place where he had first seen the vision should be resorted to; the genius might there be invoked and entreated to give a more explicit direction for his future guidance. The more Abdallah's thoughts

pointed this way, the more sanguine his hopes grew on the supposition, and his impatience to reach the spot increased in proportion.

He had now arrived within a few hours' ride of his own capital. It was evening, and the time for consulting the gifted flower, upon examining which, the Prince saw again the bright glow of crimson tinge its leaves. Abdallah looked around, but no object appeared to engage his attention—to what then could it point? To nothing assuredly in the present instance, but to the course he was now taking; and with redoubled speed did the Prince pursue his way. But he had not proceeded far, when his attention was arrested by the appearance of an aged woman, who sat by the road-side, weeping bitterly.

Abdallah, notwithstanding his anxious wish to reach home, could not pass such an object without stopping to inquire into the cause of her affliction. The poor creature's story, however, was long and perplexed—grief appeared to render her words broken and inarticulate: her endeavours to explain herself were far from being successful—the recital was confused, and filled with repetitions.

In spite of the Prince's compassion for the si-

tuation of this miserable object, he found his patience somewhat exhausted by details and circumstances, which he could not comprehend: all he could gather was, that by some flagrant act of injustice she had been reduced to the extremity of want. What then was to be done? Abdallah relieved her present distress; and, resolving to provide for her future welfare, rode on, wondering, at the same time, how this act of cruelty and injustice could take place so near his own capital, and under the wise and beneficial regulations of his venerated parent.

As these thoughts crossed his mind, he paused, and reflected on his own conduct. Was it not his duty to do more than merely to relieve a present distress?—Ought he not, as the Prince of his people, to acquaint himself with every particular, so as to enable him to prevent a like evil for the future?

With this resolution he retraced his steps—again listened to the recital of the poor woman, and, while attentively gathering the details of her narration, the shades of evening rendered her form indistinct. In the next moment it was lost, and the protecting genius of his kingdom stood before him.

Before Abdallah could recover from his astonishment, he was thus addressed :—

“ At length you have achieved a conquest which will at once restore to you the Princess Finella, and render you worthy the government of that empire over which you are called to reign. The victory you have gained is over *yourself*—an exploit more difficult than to encounter danger.

“ Know then, Prince Abdallah, that *neglect* is the hidden rock on which the mightiest kingdoms have been wrecked. It is as the mildew to the blossoms of genius—it extinguishes the glow of loyalty and patriotism, and fosters the seeds of rebellion.

“ You cannot, indeed, reach every case that may require attention; nor can you always distinguish between the importunate dissembler and the truly deserving; but you can show by your example that patience to inquire, and promptitude to redress, must act as a stimulus to those under your command to a like conduct.

“ Return in peace—be vigilant, and be happy.”



TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING.



TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING.

"HERE comes Kitty to disturb us, as usual, in our play (said little Caroline Somers, throwing down her skipping-rope). I am sure we have not been out above ten minutes, have we, Charlotte," addressing her sister.

Charlotte only laughed, for this was the usual exclamation, whether they had been a quarter or three quarters of an hour at their play.

Caroline was a good-dispositioned child—quick at her learning, lively in her manners, and only a little too fond of play. Instead of considering it as a recreation from business, she thought business an interruption of play. Though of a kind and affectionate temper, this fondness for amusement often made her appear ill-tempered and unjust.

"I know it has not struck ten," muttered she, as she went along.

"Indeed, miss, it is nearly twenty minutes af-

ter (said Kitty) ; for Mr. H—— is remarkably late to-day."

"I am sure the clock is too fast," said Caroline, who was determined to have it her own way.

By this time they had reached the house, and Caroline took her seat at the table, and looked as sulkily at the writing-master as if he came only for the purpose of tormenting her.

Mrs. Somers coming in, and observing the mood in which Caroline appeared, asked her if she had no wish to receive her lesson this morning.

This had an instantaneous effect in clearing her brow; for there was no disgrace considered so great by Mrs. Somers's children, as voluntarily to decline their tasks.

In the evening, as she was walking with Caroline and her sister, Mrs. Somers said—

"Pray, Caroline, what was the matter with you this morning, when you appeared so ill-humoured?"

"Nothing, mama," replied Caroline, rather hesitatingly.

"Then I am very sorry that you should appear so cross about nothing."

"It was not quite nothing, mama (said Caroline); it was because we were called in so soon:

Charlotte and I were having such a nice game with our skipping-ropes. I had just learned to cross hands, and was trying to keep up to a hundred, which I dare say I should have done, if Kitty had not called me in such a hurry."

"The summons always comes at an unlucky moment (observed her mother); poor Caroline is never to have her game out: I think we must give a holiday for two or three days, that she may have as much play as she likes; and I dare say, after that, she will come to her lessons with good will."

"You are not in earnest, mama (said Caroline), or else you are angry with me."

"Indeed, my dear, I am not angry with you; but merely mean to give you the pleasure you so much desire."

Caroline was delighted—thanked her mother, and talked all the way of the sport she should have during her holidays.

"It is now Tuesday (said Mrs. Somers); you shall have the remainder of the week to yourself, and we shall see what you will do with it."

"Oh! (cried Caroline), I shall have a great deal to do. In the first place I will clear my garden of the weeds, and make it very nice. Char-

lotte's is prettier than mine now; but I intend that mine shall look better than her's, for I shall take such pains with it. Then I shall make clothes for my new doll, and set all my playthings to rights: so, you see, mama, I shall not be at any loss what to do with my time."

The next morning the two sisters resumed their play—"But first (said Charlotte), I must water my garden." "Never mind doing it now (cried her sister); let us go on with our skipping: you know you will soon be called in, and then I will water your garden, and my own at the same time."

"The sun will be on it then," said Charlotte.

"Well, do as you like, Charlotte; but I shall have plenty of time when you are at your lessons."

Charlotte weeded and watered her garden, and had one more game of play; and then commenced her tasks.

Caroline, left to herself, continued skipping, though she failed in her attempts to keep up the wished-for number; and, soon growing tired of this exercise, thought she would go and water her garden; but the sun was full upon it, and some flower-roots, which had been planted the

day before, were now almost dead, while every thing in her sister's ground looked fresh and blooming.

This was very provoking; her sister had effected more, with the addition of her lessons, than she had been able with the morning at her own disposal.

It was now too hot to stay in the garden, and Caroline returned to the house, and went up into her own room with the intention of setting her playthings to rights. The clock now struck one, and, the morning lessons being over, she saw her sister, from the window, playing at ball. Caroline watched her for some time, when Charlotte, looking up, asked if she would not come down?

"I am tired of being in the garden—it is too hot: I wonder how you can bear it."

"I have been sitting still (replied her sister), and do not find it so very warm; besides, there is plenty of shade."

Caroline, fearing that her sister should suspect what was really the case, that she was already tired of her morning's amusement, went and joined her; and the time passed pretty well till dinner.

The afternoon dragged on more heavily than even the morning had done. Everybody was

very kind to her, yet she could not divest herself of the idea that she was doing wrong. It was very strange that she, who had never before had as much time as she liked for play, now that the opportunity offered, should not care for one of the many games which she had often thought she could play at for ever.

In the evening, as the family were walking out, her mother inquired of her, if she had passed a pleasant day?

“Very pleasant, indeed, mama,” said Caroline, with a sigh; for one day of her holidays was over, without giving her the satisfaction she expected.

The morning of the second day was taken up in great part with endeavouring to fix upon some of her games, which at length ended in the cup and ball.

In the afternoon Caroline sat down to work for her doll; but work does not come so well after play, as play after work; and it was accordingly soon put on one side. But, unwilling that the day should pass without her having done anything, Caroline was resolved to set her playthings to rights. This was what she had long wished to do; but certain it was that, now the opportunity offered, the inclination was wanting.

Indeed, it was somewhat of a work of patience, for Caroline had been a great collector of varieties, and there was such a confusion of silks, spangles, beads, feathers, shells, and stones, mingled together, as might well make her shrink from the task.

She was beginning, however, very diligently, to sort and place the things in some order, when, in the midst of her employment, she happened to find an old book of "Fairy Tales," and, running her eye over a page or two, she was soon so deeply engaged in the interesting adventures of the "White Cat," as to forget everything besides, and had but just finished it, when her sister came in to call her to tea.

Glad of any excuse to get rid of her present employment, Caroline tumbled her treasures into the drawer, in as much confusion as they were before, and followed Charlotte down stairs.

That evening, for almost the first time in her life, Caroline was ill-humoured, quarrelled with her sister, objected to every game that was proposed, and at last said she was tired, and should be glad to go to bed. Thus passed the second day of liberty.

On the morrow, however, she forgot all the vexations of the preceding day, and now determined

to enjoy herself. But the morning was not half spent, before the ball, the skipping-rope, and hoop were each thrown aside; and Caroline at last found no better amusement than going into the kitchen, and helping the servant to shell peas.

When this was over, she was again at a loss what to do with herself; and, by this time, was so tired of being idle, that she ventured into the school-room, even at the risk of being again set down to her lessons.

She found her mother at work, and her sister drawing. No task, however, was offered to her; and Caroline, from fearing she should be required to do something, now began to wish they would give her something to do.

After watching her sister's progress, fidgetting about the room, and looking out of the window by turns, Caroline at last, of her own accord, proposed to resume her lessons as usual.

“ My dear Caroline (said Mrs. Somers), this is what I expected: you have been taking a lesson from experience, and can now readily understand, that no task is so hard as that of doing nothing; and that it is possible to have *too much of a good thing.*

HOPE AND FEAR.

HOPE AND FEAR.

“HOPE and FEAR (said the sage of antiquity) govern mankind.”

But the nature of their dealings with the different classes of society may be exemplified by the following allegory:—

Hope and Fear were twin sisters, and for the most part constant companions; and their business was principally with the human race.

Hope was of as cheerful a temper as her sister was gloomy and sad; yet it frequently happened, that the latter was more the companion of the rich and prosperous, while her sister cheered with her smiles and promises the poor and dependent.

It is true, the tales with which she amused those who listened to her, were wild and improbable; and her promises so often broken, that her votaries frequently declared they would never believe her again. But this resolution was seldom kept; for, however often she cheated them, Hope

had only to make her appearance, and she was as welcomely received as ever.

Indeed, she never deceived any one designedly; but, from her own sanguine disposition, believed everything possible that she wished for herself, or promised to others.

It happened, on a day, that Hope and Fear journeyed together, at least as much as the nature of their tempers would allow; for Fear never went far without stopping to listen at every sound, and would sit, for hours together, in apprehension of some imaginary danger.

Hope, on the contrary, was inclined to be precipitate and venturesome: whatever object was in view, she pursued it, without reflecting on the probable means of its attainment. No ground so slight, but Hope would fix her anchor on; sometimes on the side of a steep and slippery mountain, from whence she was often precipitated: yet, noways discouraged, she would start upon a fresh enterprise, equally hazardous.

With this difference of disposition, Hope would soon have outrun her sister, but that she met with so many rebuffs that, notwithstanding her speed, Fear was never far behind.

They had not travelled a great way before they

came to a cottage, where a poor woman was watching over the cradle of a sick infant.

Fear told her there was no chance of the child's recovery, and warned her not to trust to the promises of her sister (who still lingered near), and who, upon the child's falling asleep, whispered to the mother, that it was a favourable symptom.

The poor woman was resolved not to listen to her; but Hope looked so beautiful, when she would have persuaded her that the child was better, that the mother could not help believing her, even to the moment in which the infant expired.

Fear, finding herself neglected, went on her way, and soon overtook a traveller, who was journeying that road.

Night was fast approaching, and he had a steep to climb, as well as a dreary moor to pass.

Fear now came up, and told him that a storm was coming on, and he might break his neck in climbing the steep, or lose his way in wandering over the moor.

The arguments of Fear were so powerful, that, although the traveller had got over the greater part of his way, she so magnified the difficulties he had yet to encounter, that he felt inclined to retrace his steps, and was just turning to go back,

when, at that instant, Hope came up, and, bidding him take hold of her anchor, promised to lead him in safety to his journey's end.

The traveller for some time paused in perplexity, between his advisers. Hope, however, at length prevailed, and he went forwards ; and, though the arguments of Fear did not prevent his progress, she still continued of the party, with her warnings of danger, while Hope amused him with the bright prospects of the future. In this manner they went on until the traveller arrived at his wished-for home—to the great comfort and joy of his family.

Hope and Fear now pursued their course, when a dispute arose as to which had conferred the greatest benefits on man.

“ It is very certain (said Hope), the traveller would never have reached his home, but for my assistance. Indeed, he might have arrived there much sooner, but for your troublesome cautions.”

“ But for my cautions (replied Fear), he would never have arrived there at all ; for, if I had not obliged him to look well to his footsteps, he might have been drowned by the way, or else have broken his neck down the precipice of the mountain.”

"Yes, but for one useful caution you give twenty needless alarms."

It was thus they went on disputing the point ; Hope contending that she alone was the support and consolation of mankind, and that it would go better with the world if Fear was banished altogether.

To which her companion observed, that then there would be little room for Hope.

While each was thus endeavouring to obtain pre-eminence and dominion, the minds of men presented nothing but an exaggerated state of things, insomuch as to call for the interposition of the higher powers. Reason, originally given as a regulator, had deserted her post, or was seldom seen.

At the colleges she was inquired for, where she was not always in attendance, any more than in the courts of law.

Some asserted (who pretended to have had a great share of her company), that she had deserted the human species altogether, and that the little light she had left was in possession of the brute creation.

Necessity was at length commanded to discover her retreat, who, after much labour and dili-

gence, found her in the cell of a hermit, watching over her expiring torch.

At the sudden appearance and kindling looks of Necessity, Reason began to rouse from her apathy — her vigorous motion soon brightened her torch into a blaze, and she was again ready to revisit the habitations of men.

Her torch, however, now shed very unequal rays. To some it gave a tolerable steady light, while its flickering beams, on others, did but just serve them to discern their way; and, when under the influence of Hope or Fear, not wholly to submit to the control of the one or the other.

Such was the state of the world when Religion appeared, and relumed the torch of Reason with light from heaven. Hope and Fear, when under her divine influence, became useful guides to man, prompting him to choose the good and avoid the evil that lay before him, according as the circumstances of the case awoke their respective influence. From her he learnt to render each a virtue, as well as a guard; and, by making them duly counterbalance each other, he was led eventually to fear no evil in comparison with crime, and to hope for no good unconnected with the Deity and his final rewards.

DISCONTENT.



DISCONTENT.

ON the border of a grass-plot, in the midst of a gay and highly-cultivated flower-garden, there grew a root of daisies. Immediately opposite was a brilliant parterre, where the most rare and beautiful plants were flourishing in the greatest order and perfection.

The poor little Daisy, who observed the care and attention which were bestowed upon the garden-flowers, could not help lamenting the difference which both nature and fortune had placed between their condition and her's. If the weather was dry, these pampered favourites had their roots refreshed by artificial showers: their stalks, as they grew up, were carefully supported, their leaves and buds carefully watched, and preserved from the depredations of slugs and caterpillars; and not a weed was allowed to approach them—while she, all the while, was left to struggle as

she could against the encroachments of grass, trefoil, and plantain.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the Daisy grew strong and healthy; her buds daily increased around her, the soft dews of evening nourished her roots, and the sun, which shed its beams on all alike, expanded her flowers, and tinted her petals with the brightest red. But the canker of discontent had taken possession of her mind.

Early one morning, before the sun had arisen, or the birds awakened—while the dew-drops hung thick on every bud, and all nature was wrapt in the calm serenity of the hour, the Daisy, though her flowers were closed, was ruminating on her condition, when, at once, the air was stirred by a gentle breeze, and she felt her leaves suddenly expand, as if under the influence of a mid-day sun. A form brilliant and beautiful was bending over her; and the Daisy knew, as if by instinct, that she beheld Flora, the guard and genius of the flowery tribe.

“Of what (said the bright vision), does my Daisy complain—the most favoured of my children, and one that I always deemed the happiest?”

The poor little flower, though awed in some degree by the presence of the genius, yet felt in-

dignant at the idea of being thought favoured and happy.

“ Alas ! (replied she), is it wonderful that a wretch, neglected and despised as I am, should complain ? Placed, too, in a situation where I have the opportunity, daily and hourly, of comparing my condition with that of the favourites of fortune ? Were I perishing, not a drop of the water which is so lavishly poured on them, would ever be bestowed on me ; and am I not trodden to the earth twenty times a day by those who give all their attention and admiration to a favoured tribe. Possessing neither beauty nor fragrance to attract the regard of the human race, nor even sweets for the insect world, I do not wonder that I am held in no esteem ; but can I, at the same time, help repining at being what I am ? ”

“ In lamenting your supposed misfortunes, like all who are discontented, you entirely overlook the blessings you possess. It is true, indeed, the Daisy does not experience the care and attention which are bestowed upon the garden-flowers ; but how much greater an advantage is it to have a constitution independent of all such assistance ? The full beams of a July sun, which would wither some of these objects of your envy, does but en-

large your blossoms : the keen wind, or driving storm, that would destroy all their beauty, passes unheeded by you ; and the careless footstep, from the pressure of which you rise elastic and unbroken, would prove destructive to the brittle stalks of these more tender productions of nature. Neither is the Daisy despised—if not highly valued, it is yet always pleasing : for what flower can boast so enduring a season ? blooming in the earliest spring, and often gilding, with its smiles, the latest months of the year; welcome to the sight of the passenger, as it reminds him of the opening year, and brings also to his recollection that still happier season, the days of childhood, when, to seek Butter-flowers and Daisies was his greatest delight.”

The Daisy, though she listened with apparent attention, felt neither consoled nor convinced by these arguments in favour of her condition, which the genius perceiving, said to her :—

“ You have hitherto only remarked the general advantages which other and more cultivated flowers possess over you ; but wait patiently the revolving season, and when, after careful observation, you find one individual plant you would like to become, your wishes shall be fulfilled.”

The genius of the garden then disappeared, leaving the Daisy rejoiced in the prospect of being raised to the rank she had so long and so vainly desired.

At one time, to have been placed in the condition of any of these envied objects, would have been sufficient to content her; but so wide a range to choose out of was beyond her hopes. There was, however, something rather perplexing in it; and the Daisy resolved to watch with the utmost circumspection the different natures and characters of the various plants, in order that she might make a judicious choice.

It was now getting late in the autumn—nothing was left but Dalias, Michaelmas Daisies, and China-asters, to ornament the garden. But the station which these flowers held, now that the Daisy had the power to hold the same, no longer appeared desirable. They were, indeed, beautiful, and much admired, as the last of their tribe to enliven the season; but there was something melancholy and desolate in never flourishing but amidst the ruins of summer, when the ground was strewed with dead leaves, and every thing around them in decay.

Autumn passed away; the winter came in

bright and frosty; and the evergreens now appeared pre-eminent, as sovereigns of the soil.

The Daisy considered them with much attention; rich and beautiful as they were at all seasons, but peculiarly so at this time of the year; their emerald leaves gemmed with the hoar-frost, and their branches enlivened by scarlet berries. Besides, they were unchanged and invulnerable to all weathers. But, to counterbalance these advantages, the Daisy remarked, there was a cold rigidity in their nature, which rendered them alike insensible of good and of evil. If they were indifferent to the stormy winds and nipping frosts, they were equally so to the warm sun or the soft rain; and the sweet dew which refreshed every other plant, fell on them as though they were unconscious of its influence; and the Daisy soon decided, that any condition was preferable to such an insensible nature.

The severity of the winter began to slacken, and in the month of February the snow-drops peeped out from the bosom of the earth. Although not very striking in their appearance, yet it was delightful to be the heralds of the spring—the first flowers of the season; and they were welcomed by every one, with a pleasure which was

truly flattering ; while, at the same time, their unpretending and modest demeanour totally disarmed envy.

The second day, however, after the opening of these early, but ill-fated blossoms, they were buried beneath a heavy fall of snow. The storm at length subsided—the sun shone bright, but the beauty of the Snow-drop was gone ; and the Daisy could not but lament the destiny of these fragile flowers, whose tender stalks and delicate hues seemed but ill calculated for the season in which they were destined to bloom.

The Snow-drops had scarcely faded, before the Crocuses began to show themselves, who, notwithstanding the fate of their predecessors, were pushing forward with all imaginable expedition. They were a gay merry little tribe, with a high opinion of their own consequence, and very proud of their attire of bright yellow, or rich purple. It was evident that they considered themselves the finest flowers in the garden, and imagined February to be the finest month in the year. Their's, however, was a harmless vanity and happy self-delusion.

The weather was now remarkably favourable—the sun shone brightly every day, and the Crocuses

expanded their blossoms each morning, to receive its beams, seeming most truly to enjoy every moment of their existence. In little more than a fortnight their brief reign was over: without any appearance of decay, or fading of the colours, the flowers all at once drooped their heads, as if they had been broken; and, in a short time, nothing remained of them but long straggling grass, more littering than ornamental.

All this time the Daisy lay snug in her little green nest, occasionally putting forth a flower, but retaining her full bloom and vigour for more genial weather; while the Crocuses were never awake to existence for more than a month out of the year; nor were they above half that period in perfection. They had appeared, however, satisfied with their condition, yet the Daisy could not help feeling that her own lot was preferable to their's; and for a time she was better contented than formerly; when, one day, the gardener brought from the green-house a number of pots of different flowers, all in full blossom—Moss-roses, Persian Lilacs, Hyacinths, and Tulips.

The sight of them raised an instantaneous wish in the Daisy to become one of these first-rate favourites, who appeared to hold a rank

far above those of the same species in the open garden.

The Roses seemed to exult in their premature bloom, while their relations in the parterre had not yet ventured to unclose their leaves; and the gay Tulips looked with contempt on the beds where their kindred laid buried beneath the surface of the earth.

The Daisy observed, however, that notwithstanding the appearance of perfect health which they exhibited, these nurslings of the green-house seemed to shrink from the breeze as they were carried along; and, though it was a sun-shiny morning, and mild for the time of year, yet the gardener hurried them into the house, as if he feared the least exposure to the open air might prove injurious to them.

Nothing that was now coming forward in the garden appeared worthy the Daisy's attention, compared to these rare and valued objects. A short time, however, showed her how ill she had judged in aspiring to a similar station. The plants were now discarded from the house, but, alas! how altered from their appearance when they entered it. The Hyacinths and Tulips were faded, and the Roses had drooped, and many of

their buds had withered before they had strength to blow. The Persian Lilacs, too, made a most deplorable figure ; all their blossoms hanging down before their natural decay, and their leaves being shrunk and withered before they were half grown.

But what seemed most grievous in the fate of these plants was that, now they stood in so much need of it, no care or attention was bestowed upon them. After being made tender by the warmth of a room, they were exposed to every variety of weather ; and, after being cherished and admired, all that was now considered was to place them where they might not offend the sight.

The Daisy felt much compassion for these discarded favourites. “ Surely (thought she), any condition is preferable to their’s : better, like me, to live unseen and unthought of, than to be the objects of such capricious favour.”

As the season advanced, buds and flowers were daily springing forth ; but, as their numbers increased, envy and jealousy arose among the rival beauties. The pale Narcissus complained of being eclipsed by the gaudy Daffodil, which grew near it ; while the latter thought itself ill-treated in being considered a flower of inferior value, and

not entitled to a more conspicuous station. Then the Double Primrose despised the Polyanthus, as being old-fashioned; while the Polyanthus, in its turn, valued itself on some peculiar properties, and was disturbed at being such a close neighbour to the Primrose, who, it whispered, had some vulgar relations in a field at no great distance. But soon all petty animosities were hushed in a concern of more general interest, as the Auriculas were expected to shine forth in full splendour.

The day at length arrived, when these favourites of the florist were to be brought forward in a public exhibition. The stage was placed in a most advantageous situation, and the gardener, rubbing his hands with great satisfaction, was heard to declare, that for many years he had not had so fine a show.

Daily and hourly were they gazed at and admired; for a time no other flower was regarded, and the triumph of the Auriculas appeared complete, although, by the vegetable tribe, they were abused and ridiculed on every side, for being powdered and painted. In short, they were considered as the dandies of the garden.

There was some truth in these remarks—the Auriculas had certainly a formal and artificial ap-

pearance; yet still they were so glittering and beautiful, and held in so high estimation, that the Daisy was half determined in her mind to become one of the tribe.

The extreme care that was taken to protect these valued flowers preserved their bloom for a considerable time undiminished. Every day they held their heads higher, and their colours became more brilliant, when one afternoon there fell a heavy shower of rain, and, by one of those chances that so often occur on similar occasions, the Auri-
culas happened to be left without their usual shelter: the consequences may be easily imagined; the rain, which only refreshed and enliv-
ened the other flowers and plants, proved de-
structive to them. The fine meal with which
they were so profusely sprinkled, was either com-
pletely washed off, or splashed and mingled with
the other colours. In short, they could not again
hold up their heads for the remainder of the
season.

But to whose neglect it was owing, or how it happened that these much-prized flowers were left exposed during the rain, never came to the Daisy's knowledge; who, however, saw sufficient to make her no longer covet to become one of

these highly-esteemed plants, as their mortification appeared to be in the same proportion to their former exaltation.

The Tulips were by this time coming fast forward. They appeared to be of a still higher rank, and were objects of equal interest and regard, as beautiful as their predecessors, without being so liable to sustain injury from the weather. Yet, with all the advantages they possessed, the Daisy soon perceived they were the most discontented flowers that grew, their pride making them regard every other flower as their inferior, whilst among themselves they were at constant enmity.

One valued itself upon its ancient stock, another on its high-sounding name or title; a third, on the price which had been paid for it. These, again, were superseded by others, whose various claims, whether of novelty or of colour, continued their animosities.

The Daisy watched the growth of these vain, though beautiful flowers, with more curiosity than interest; when, one day, a Tulip of extraordinary size, although not yet opened, standing in a large pot by itself, was placed, by the gardener, in front of all the rest.

Now this object of attraction, it appeared, had but lately arrived from Holland, was of a new kind, and bore a very sounding name.

All the pride and arrogance of the whole Tulip race seemed centered in this single root, which, as it stood towering above its companions, evidently considered itself as far superior to the surrounding group, as they imagined themselves to be to every other plant.

The weather happened to be rather cool and cloudy—the Tulips kept their petals closed up, and the growth of the stranger was impeded from the same cause. Its progress was watched by the gardener with the utmost solicitude; and, one evening, he pronounced that on the following day it would be fully blown; but, at the same time, it was remarked, that, after narrowly inspecting its appearance, he looked more serious than usual, observing, at the same time, to those about him, that it was too dark for him to see clearly.

The next morning came in bright and clear;—the sun, which for some days had been obscured, blazed forth in all its splendour, as if to hail the opening of the stranger flower, which was now fully expanded. But what was the disappointment of the owner, who had paid an immense sum

for the bulb ; and the vexation of the gardener, who had taken so much pains to forward its growth ; when it was discovered to be faulty : it had two foul specks, and the form of the flower was also imperfect.

Great was the mortification of the haughty Tulip, who, expecting to eclipse all its competitors, found itself thus suddenly discarded from its conspicuous situation, and regarded as comparatively worthless.

The other Tulips triumphed in the disgrace of this much-dreaded rival ; and, for a time, seemed to forget their former animosities and jealousies of each other.

The Daisy could not feel much pity for the fate of the vain and haughty flower, whose pride and arrogance well deserved the disgrace which had attended them ; yet, at the same time, she entertained no wish to become one of a tribe who could derive pleasure only from such a circumstance. She had observed sufficient to convince her that, among the higher order of plants, there were more mortifications and grievances than she could possibly be subject to in her own humble station ; and she found that to choose from among them a happier condition was not so easy as she at first imagined.

As the month of June advanced, and the air was filled with the fragrance of the blossoms and flowers, which were on all sides bursting into life and beauty, glowing with every colour which could delight the eye, the Daisy again looked round her with a strong wish to become one of the blooming throng; but every day the difficulty of fixing her choice became greater. The garden-flowers, taken altogether, seemed to have great advantages; but not one individual possessed all the requisites she desired.

Beauty, strength, fragrance, and durability, were qualities distributed among the various kinds —the Daisy wanted them all united in one flower; but a flower of this sort it was not easy to discover.

What, for instance, could be more brilliant than the Larkspurs, or what could boast a greater variety of gay colours? Far different from the Tulips, there seemed to be a perfect union among themselves, without any affected superiority towards those below them in rank, or envy of such as held a higher station.

But the Daisy, though she admired their beauty, and esteemed their amiable qualities, did not aspire to become one of a number whose existence was but limited. Sown in March, and blooming in June, they withered by September.

Their fate, however, was that of all other animals; nor could it be termed hard, as they appeared to enjoy every hour of their existence.

The Daisy, however, accustomed to bud out year after year, would not have exchanged her own hardy and enduring constitution, for the advantages of any flower whose duration was so short.

The Pinks, which next opened, caught the attention of the Daisy; they were very pretty, sweet-scented, and generally admired: but then, on the other hand, excepting the time when they were in bloom, nothing in the garden held so mean an appearance.

The gardener was constantly complaining of their ragged and unruly growth; for, notwithstanding the pains he took to keep them in neat and trim order, they were always breaking bounds, encroaching on their neighbours' territories, and spreading their matted grass in all directions. Indeed, from their wild and careless habits, they seemed, notwithstanding their rank and condition, more fitted for the field than for the garden.

The Daisy now became more perplexed than ever, respecting the choice she should make as to her future condition, when a fine Moss Rose-tree, the buds of which were just beginning to open,

attracted her attention, and she wondered that the thought of becoming a Rose had not sooner occurred to her; for, in this flower, all the qualities she sought appeared to be centred.

It was preeminent in beauty and sweetness, and, at the same time, was hardy and durable—the universal favourite of everybody, and the acknowledged queen of the garden.

The Daisy now felt resolved in her mind to seek no farther; but, as soon as the time allotted was expired, to take her station in the form of one of these beautiful shrubs, which she doubted not must enjoy a state of happiness in proportion to the advantages it possessed.

Close beside the Rose there grew a stately Lily, and the simple elegance of its form, and the dazzling whiteness of its flower, were well contrasted by the rich and luxuriant beauty of the Rose. The Daisy scarcely knew which to admire most; both appeared equally lovely.

But one still summer's night, when the other flowers were closed in slumber, a soft murmur of complaint reached the ear of the Daisy, arising from the spot where the Rose and Lily sprung up; and, listening attentively, she heard the following conversation:—

“ Believe me (said the Rose), I should feel myself happier were I a Marsh-mallow in the common field, where, unvalued and unsought, my buds and flowers might flourish round me ; but the favour of the human race is my destruction. For what is their kindness ?—Whilst I am celebrated by the poet, and made the comparison for every thing that is considered beautiful, how am I treated ! Not the commonest flower that grows is snatched from its stem with so little remorse. In vain has nature armed me with thorns to repel these rude attacks ; even the profusion of my blossoms is a misfortune ; for while flowers of inferior value are spared, because they grow singly on their stalk, everybody feels entitled to pluck my ill-fated buds, on account of their number. You, my friend, in this instance, possess a considerable advantage : no one ever thinks of taking a single flower of the Lily, and to gather the entire cluster would be considered little less than a crime.”

“ Alas ! my dear friend (replied the Lily), have you not heard my doom, which was passed but yesterday, by my mistress and her friends ?”

“ I heard only (said the Rose), the warm praises that were bestowed on the grace and beauty of your form, while no notice was taken of me. Think

DISCONTENT.

no loved companion, that I felt envious of the ration which you so justly excited; but I could not help lamenting my hard fate, having that morning been despoiled of all my flowers by the very persons who were so lavish in your praise, and who now held me as no longer an object of regard or attention."

"And yet (said the Lily), their treatment of me has been still more unkind and capricious; for after, as you observe, bestowing the highest commendations upon me, one of the ladies said, that, notwithstanding its beauty, she never would have a White Lily in her garden; 'for (continued she), **of all flowers in the world, the lower class of people are most fond of them.** Every cottage garden along the road's side is decorated with White Lilies; and there they grow, in solitary pomp, amidst potatoes and cabbages, or perhaps adorning the entrance of a pigstye; and the bit of ground adjoining the blacksmith's shop has scarcely any other flowers in it.' The lady then gave a ludicrous description of the deplorable appearance of my unfortunate species, who were growing in this smoky atmosphere. Ridicule had done its work—the tide of favour was turned against me, and my weak and fickle mistress, who a short time before had termed me the pride of the parterre, ha-ven-

enced me to be banished, in order to make room for a Black Hollyhock, which is allowed to possess no other recommendation than that of being uncommon. So much for the odd notions of these beings, who call themselves rational."

The Daisy listened with surprise and sorrow—could she have ever supposed it possible, that she should be unwilling to exchange conditions with either the Rose or the Lily? Yet so it was, and every day's experience showed her, that happiness was far more equally divided than it appeared to be.

As the season advanced, though many of the gay flowers that adorned the early months had passed away, the garden did not lack ornaments; for the Carnations, those beautiful and distinguished plants, were now in full bloom, and the air was scented with their spicy fragrance.

High in rank and estimation, the Carnations possessed all the desirable qualifications, without being liable to the grievances of which the Rose and the Lily had complained. Nothing could seem happier than their condition: yet the Daisy felt no desire to exchange her own humble lot for theirs; for she had observed their early training, and the severe discipline they constantly endured. All their branches spread, or twisted, to the gardener's fancy—not allowed to grow without being

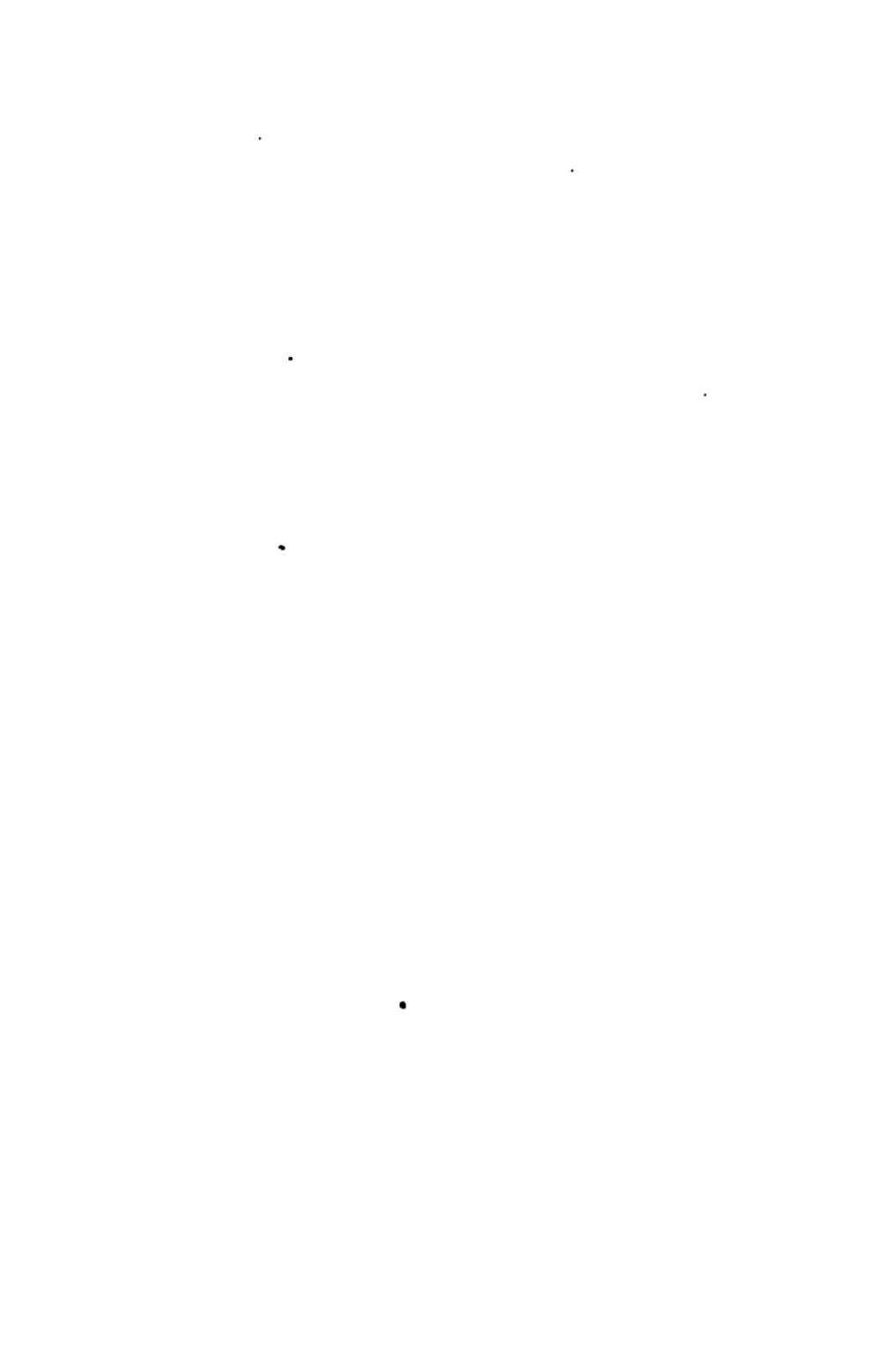
confined at every joint; and, of the most valuable kind, even the flowers were not permitted to open, but under restriction, and cased with paper. The little Daisy, who had been accustomed to strike her roots, and send forth her buds, as nature directed, at once decided, that nothing could compensate for such restraints.

Twelve months had now gone round; and in the various tribes of plants which had formerly been the objects of the Daisy's envy, she found, upon close observation, that there was not one whose condition she preferred to her own; her ill-formed conjectures had proved groundless; her ambitious wishes no longer prevailed; but, in the meantime, the Daisy had learnt an excellent lesson—for she had learnt **TO BE CONTENT.**

THE END.









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